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OR KNOT TO BE

This is a response to your August issue featuring Slipknot. I was both shocked and pleased with your issue and article on these clowns. The article was soooooo funny that I could not tell if you guys were being serious or not. The kids being interviewed were lost, sad and aggressive kids. Teenagers, just like I was. The sad thing is the youth today seems way more messed up than 10 years ago. I'm 28, and having seen *Spinal Tap* as a young child, understood the joke of some rock bands while I was teenager. Shit! Slipknot, what a joke man. I mean their music is actually OK. (I am very fortunate to have a 32-year-old friend who has been listening to various types of metal since he was 11, so I kind of have an ear for decal metal.) But shit, the article is a fucking joke man. I felt like a teeny-bopper looking at the stupid gatefold poster. Thanks to MTV, *Spin*, *Rolling Stone*, and other various outlets, kids who two years ago would have never listened to this type of music are seeing the image and thinking it's cool. We have heard this before and it will happen again with another genre of music. Korn, Dip Limpshit and the like seem like the New Grunge. Most of these kids don't even realize (or don't want to) that Korn only rocked for the first two albums, Dip Limpshit Sucks and always has and that Kid Rock is a talentless drug addict who is headed for the grave or rehab. By the way, Fred Durst lip syncs as evidenced on MTV's backstage concert thing that was on last weekend. Watch it and see! He is talentless! This stuff burns me out man. Guess I'll just smoke a fatty and put on C.O.C.'s *Deliverance*.

Chris Miller [chris.dmliller@gte.net]

Chris, the proper invective is "Limp Dipshit." Of course, it's obnoxious patronizing someone about such a thing just because you're more mature and think you know better. So, at least have the decency to become a rock critic first.—ed.

I SWEAR ON THE HAIR OF ADAM CURRY I SHALL HAVE MY REVENGE!

When I was a young lad, I remember when MTV was new. I remember watching it for hours on end. I remember when it was nothing but music. Twenty-four hours of virtually nonstop music videos. What more could a gen-X kid ask for? Apparently our generation asked for a lot. We asked for stupid game shows. We asked for horrible "VJs." We asked MTV to tell us what to listen to and when. We asked for MTV to decide what we like, what we wear, what we eat and even who we vote for. We let a multi-billion dollar corporation run our lives.

The first reason I hate MTV is simply because they don't play enough music. They play whatever trendy songs three to four times an hour and fill in the rest of the time with commercials. There is no spectrum of music. There is no education. There is nothing for us to broaden our horizons. Instead we get four videos repeated over and over and 24-hour marathons of *The Real* (ha ha) *World*. If there's any spare time, we also get an anorexic bimbo to share with us how "un-cool" we are if we aren't wearing certain clothes or driving specific cars.

The second reason I hate MTV is that I hate being told what and what not to like. MTV has taken lifestyles and made them "cool." For instance...I firmly believe that because of MTV, it is widely accepted and even cool for girls to either be bisexual or to experiment with bisexuality. If a person is bisexual or gay, that's just fine by me. But it's not "cool" to be gay. It's not "cool" to be straight or anything else. Society has completely changed its views on this due to the attitudes displayed on MTV. Don't believe me? I encourage you to ask around. I guarantee that people are more accepting and receptive to a woman being bisexual than a man. I must reiterate that I think there is nothing wrong with bisexuality or homosexuality. I just can't stand the way it's made to be the "hippest thing since sliced bread."

I'm not saying that MTV is the only enemy. That's not the case. There are many evils lurking in our homes, and we let them overtake our lives. The reason I target MTV is because it's the one reaching and changing the kids. Nothing is cool. Everything is cool. It's up to us. We as individuals decide. Take back the one freedom we really have.

And that is why I hate MTV.

Mark Harmon [PunkBeatch@aol.com]

Wow, Mark, that post-Chicago Hope career dive has really made you peevish at *The Man*. So, if I'm getting this right, MTV is telling everyone to dress up in masks, listen to rap-rock and be bisexual. I've got to give them some credit. I thought all lame corporate entities had lost their sense of humor after Pee-Wee's Playhouse got cancelled. What can you do? Kids are such joiners today. When I was young we kept it real by drinking grain alcohol in peach orchards.—ed.

CORRECTION:

Contrary to the review in the August issue, the Aislars Set's *The Last Match* should be filed under reimagining the pop past, and is R.I.Y.L. the Byrds, Tiger Trap, Taluiah Gosh and the Kinks.

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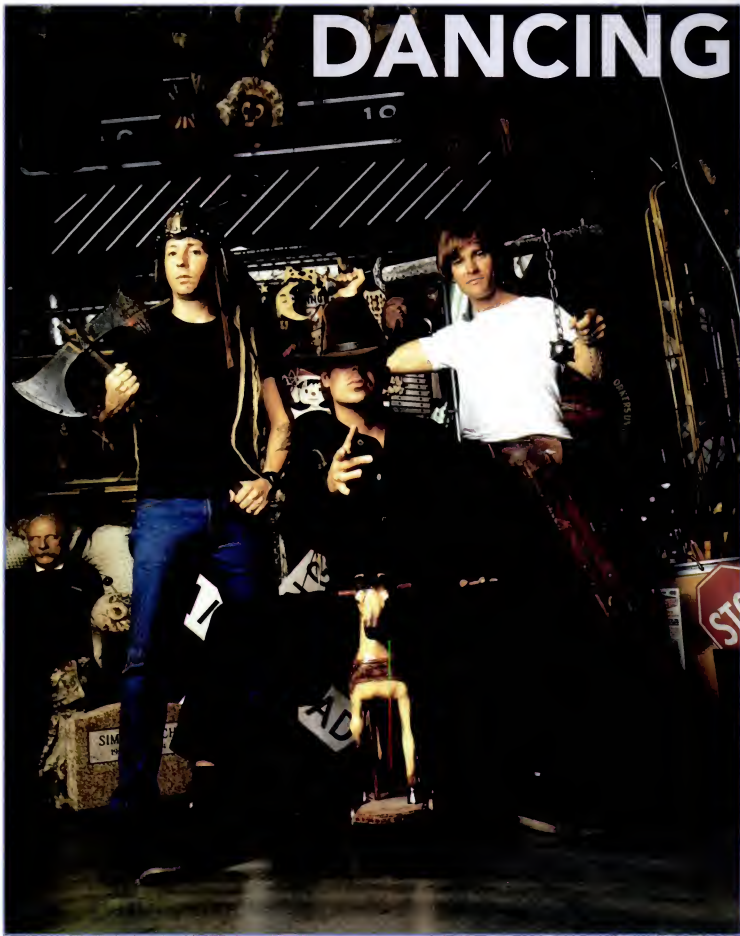
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DANCING



N THE DARK

Can Fastball shine that million-selling modern rock magic on *The Harsh Light Of Day*?

STORY: JON REGARDIE PHOTO: CHAPMAN BAEHLER

When you're on tour, nighttime is the right time. What happens during the day? Nothing. Mostly driving. Nighttime is show time, and is filled with fun activity, while daytime is filled with drudgery like catching a plane or doing an interview."

That's guitarist Miles Zuniga's simple explanation for *The Harsh Light Of Day* (Hollywood), the title of Fastball's follow-up to the out-of-left-field hit, *All The Pain Money Can Buy*. It's also a big tip-off that this Austin, Texas trio views life in dichotomies.

You may remember that Fastball whizzed to platinum status along "The Way," the dramatic, arching single off '98's *Pain*. The trio harvests fruit from the same melodic landscape on the new record, weaving subtle songcraft with a recurring exploration of dark and light. In fact, the most appropriate word to describe Fastball's new album is more often employed to describe art than music: *Chiaroscuro*, as defined by the dictionary, means light and dark in a work of art manipulated to suggest a dramatic illusion of depth.

"It is definitely a strong theme," acknowledges the pensive Zuniga, 33, who shares songwriting and singing duties with tattooed, shaggy 36-year-old bassist Tony Scalzo. As is his custom, drummer Joey Shuffield, 38, remains quiet during most of the interview.

The band formed in 1994 when Shuffield, an Austin native, introduced Laredo-born Zuniga to Scalzo, who had escaped Cali's Orange County punk-rock scene. They dropped their original name, Magneto, when they learned someone else already had it. Despite little love for baseball, they adopted Fastball at the last minute in advance of their 1996 debut, *Make Your Mama Proud* (Hollywood).

Mama's 14 speedy power-pop songs flopped harder than an obese teen stage-diving at a Limp Bizkit show. The record sold only about 2,000 copies, and the band responded by radically changing its sound, trading the watered-down Green Day vibe for a slower, radio-friendly style that put them on tour with the Goo Goo Dolls and on the H.O.R.D.E. festival bill. *Pain* went on to sell more than a million copies.

The slow tunes return on *Harsh Light*, and keyboard and string accents are used smartly, occasionally displaying affection for the classic power pop of Big Star, Elvis Costello and the Beatles. "Love Is Expensive And Free" features both Brian Setzer on guitar and a 16-member mariachi band. All of this pleases Fastball, but will certainly pose challenges for those alterna-rock stations that have replicated the quirky 1998 melodicism of *Barenaked Ladies* and *Everclear* with Limp Bizkit-style crunch.

"Right now you're either vanilla or chocolate," remarks Zuniga. "It's either Backstreet Boys, really glossy stuff like that, or the rap-rock-metal thing. No one is playing rock 'n' roll anymore, and I think there is still a huge audience that wants to hear that.

"While we may be a 'poor man's Green Day,' we are great at what we do now. There are few bands that can touch us, and I'm not trying to be cocky, but it's the truth. Who are our peers? If Crowded House were still around..."

"They have a new album," interrupts Scalzo.

"Okay," responds Zuniga, who then pauses before uttering what sound like famous last words: "Neil Finn, amazing songwriter, incredible voice. There are a lot of bands who have good songs who are in the vein of music we play, but I don't know if they have the material we do. We'll just see in three or four years who is still standing." **NMM**

BILLIE... BASKET CASE?

At first, interviewing Green Day's forthright Billie Joe Armstrong was a pleasure. The platinum punk happily volunteered that he's thrown away his trademark guitar-pick necklace to symbolize a shift in priorities: Family now takes precedence over the band. But when we picked up on the intimate vibe, well, Billie got a little uncomfortable:

Billie, mental health seems to play a big part in the Green Day aesthetic: *Insomniac*, "Basket Case," the new album, *Warning (Reprise)* is described as "happy, but not in a Prozac sort of way." Has therapy helped shaped Green Day, or proven lyrical fodder or inspiration?

Ummm, I don't think I want to answer that question.... I have to go.

Really?

I have an album to make.... Nice meeting you man. (dial tone) --Lorne Brehman



RADIOHEAD + RAP = SONIC SUM?



SONIA PACIO

OK Computer's hip-hop brother

All my life I've been awaiting your coming," greets an android's voice at the apartment door, "and dreading it."

This must be Himbro St. Where's that, you ask? Physically it's in the Bronx—but Himbro St. is also a state of mind, the title of a song by Sonic Sum and an anagram for the hip-hop act's mountainous mic man, Rob Smith, inhabitant of said apartment. Cloud-lined sentiments like the one served up by the electro-rude intercom are characteristic of Smith's verbal riffs on Sonic Sum's upcoming EP, tentatively titled *Humans Here* (Skypimps-Ozone). For example, as a single piano key freefalls toward a squelchy bass-ment, Smith delivers: "I'd like to listen to you but my ears are in the way."

Simply put, Sonic Sum is hip-hop's Radiohead—a group more interested in today's realities than yesterday's categories; in changing the face of its genre without erasing its features. Heed the ol'-school structured, call-and-response chorus of new Sonic Sum track "Paste": "Take-lathom-matic (short wave)/ Middle exaggerratic (port hole)".

The Sum's debut album, *The Sanity Annex* (Skypimps-Ozone),

released earlier this year, wrapped tripwires around hip-hop's gangrenous knee. As inspired by Peter Sellers as he is by Rakim, Smith explains the album's centerpiece "It's An Ashtray" by stating, "The world is a pottery class, but you keep fucking up the damn lamp until it becomes an ashtray."

His verses are dense, yet not difficult. For all the downtowns, there's a buoyant perseverance to his flow: "Let me underdose on my unhappiness long enough to find sure footing." Erick M.O.'s Mingus-like basslines and the pointed-on-pointillism of turntablists DJ Jun and Fred Ones keep things sailing smoothly along.

Sonic Sum opts for loose and almost improvisational structures, finding the light in jazz-like innovations. Smith sees the current state of hip-hop as akin to the point when be-bop took off for freer pastures. "Right now in hip-hop, people are going in different patterns in terms of beats and rhymes. If things go hand-in-hand with the bop period, I'd hate to envision how such a negative reaction will affect the practitioners." When Sonic Sum comes knocking, there's no reason for dread. —Peter Relic

HELL HOLES

Spiñal Tap's main man explains the importance of the umlaut.

Huge things have historically dominated metal: huge riffs, huge speakers and huge hair. But there's no better proof that big things come in little packages than the umlaut. Metallurgists from Mötley Crüe to Mötley Crüe have proven the eensy diacritic as iconic as Spandex, pyrotechnics and Aqua-Net.

Spiñal Tap's David St. Hubbins explains the umlaut's universal appeal: "It's like a pair of eyes. You're looking at the umlaut, and the umlaut is looking at you."

But unlike the legitimate 'lauts gracing the names of Björk or Häscher Dü, the metal umlaut doesn't have any phonetic purpose, simply serving as shorthand for "We rawk!" and making confused Germans shout "Mo-ET-ley Cru-UH!" Just where did this tongue-twisting trend originate?

Writer Richard Meltzer (who has a new anthology, *A Whore Just Like The Rest*) says it was his fault. In 1970, his friends reinvented their psychedelic-pop outfit as the metal band Blue Öyster Cult. Meltzer recalls talking with frontman Sandy Pearlman: "He'd come up with the name that day. I said, 'How about an umlaut over the 'O'?' Metal had a Wagnerian aspect anyway."

The umlaut took off from there, though some users admit to a love-hate relationship. "The umlaut over the 'y' has haunted us for years," admits Geoff Tate of Queensrÿche, whose latest album is Q2K (Atlantic). "We spent 11 years trying to explain how to pronounce it."

Of course, Spiñal Tap—whose classic rockumentary, *This Is Spiñal Tap*, has just been released by MGM—blazed new linguistic trails by placing an umlaut over a consonant. "We wanted an umlaut," explains St. Hubbins. "But 'spine' is of a Latin root, and Latin words don't cry out for an umlaut. So Nige! [Tufnel] said, 'What about that thing that looks like a ladies' pump, that goes over the "n" in some Spanish words?' I said, 'No—we'll be viewed as a Latin band.' Little did I know it'd become huge 35 years later! So I said, 'Look, let's put an umlaut over the "n." It was an unofficial umlaut, but aren't they all? It's like Magritte's work: *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*. So...*Ceci n'est pas un umlaut*.'" »Lisa Gidley



IN MY ROOM

MARK KOZELEK OF THE RED HOUSE PAINTERS



Those familiar with San Francisco mopsters the Red House Painters may also be acquainted with the unending label limbo that's faced their sixth album, *Old Raman*. Understandably, singer/guitarist Mark Kozelek has been a bit bored. To combat the malaise, he did what any sane musician would do: He recorded some AC/DC covers. The tracks, coupled with a John Denver song and a handful of new, Painter-ish pretty and deliciously melancholy Kozelek tunes, make up the songwriter's first solo record, *Rock 'N' Roll Singer* (Badman). Though Kozelek spent most of last year in L.A., acting in Cameron Crowe's upcoming *Almost Famous*, he calls a one-bedroom apartment overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge home. He describes the contents here. »Nicole Keiper

ANTIQUE CLOCKS My favorite one is a grandfather clock from the mid-1700s. In the middle is the grandfather clock, and on the sides is where you'd put dishes on display—but I've got that as a CD case. It's just the shell of the clock though; the actual insides are missing. And it just sort of serves as a piece of furniture—it's a CD holder, you know?

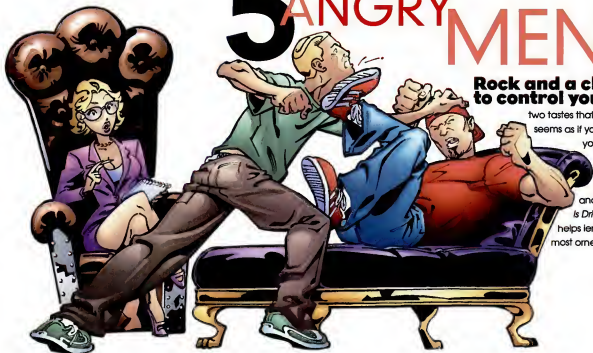
ANTIQUE DINNERWARE I've been collecting now for a year or so. I saw one plate—this turquoise blue plate—and I bought that and a few other pieces and had them shipped when I moved. Those pieces

all broke because I didn't pack them right. My mom sent me an old green Fiesta coffee server that's really pretty to look at. And I got a couple pieces of black Bauer, and black is the most collectible because you could only custom order it.

FLAMING LIPS I never really made a connection with that band. I saw them a few months ago here, and it was really loud and the sound just wasn't great, and every song they did required some sort of setup. But I just did these shows in Sweden with them, and when you're away, it always seems that some music ends up being kind of like the soundtrack of that time. I finally bought their new record, and I think it's really good.

BLOODY FIGHTS I'm a huge boxing fan, so I've got a couple thousand fights on video. I've got like five shelves of boxing videos from turn-of-the-century fights like Jack Dempsey and Joe Louis, up to fights now. The drama of it is just so high. To be in a place with 18,000 people who are completely silent and watching how the crowd erupts when something dramatic happens: It's incredible. I find it really relaxing, and it takes my mind off daily stress. If I'm stressed out, and I go see a Martin Scorsese movie and I see Robert De Niro or Joe Pesci beating somebody in the head with a baseball bat or something, it can be sort of cathartic.

5 ANGRY MEN



Rock and a childish inability to control yourself

have always been two tastes that taste great together. But lately, it seems as if you can't crack the top 40 unless you're facing 25 to life. Because we care (no, really) we've sought the advice of a professional. Barbara A. Berg, licensed social worker and author of *What To Do When Life Is Driving You Crazy!* (Creative Options), helps lend some advice to five of rock's most ornery characters. —Tom Mallon

Lars Ulrich (Metallica)

Troubles With The Man: ...And *Justice For All* takes on new meaning when considering the rash of legal smackdowns Lars and his buddies have handed out lately. In April 2000, they sued Napster for copyright infringement; in January 1999 they sued the dastardly Victoria's Secret for making a lip pencil called "Metallica"; and in December 1998 they sued Amazon.com for selling bootleg CDs. All that and a summer tour?

Where do they find the time? **Barbara's Breakdown:** "Okay, so this guy's like a dog peeing on a fire hydrant. Just know that he's probably going to have the idea that his territory is bigger than it really is," she says. "Of Wolf And Man." Indeed!

She Recommends: Meds-tallica. "He could have some paranoia," she says. "There's some meds that are good for this. You take the right med. you don't want to sue everybody. It's the darnedest thing."

Puff Daddy

Troubles With The Man: P-Diddy sat high atop the rap game until his temper got the best of him. In April 1999, he beat Interscope Records executive Steve Stoute with a champagne bottle (among other weapons) after Stoute refused to remove a scene from Nas's "Hate Me Now" video that Puffy considered objectionable.

Barbara's Breakdown: Pretty smooth. "Well, that's a relatively sophisticated thing to do," she says of P.D.'s choice of weapon. "I would say he feels himself better than most people. He beats people up in a tux; does that make him more in control? I don't think so."

She Recommends: Think beats, not beatdowns. "You can take any mes and learn every damn thing about it, even...write a song about it," she says. "Help your audience learn something." Violence + Christopher Cross samples = paydirt!

Fred Durst (Limp Bizkit)

Troubles With The Man: In addition to being a potty-mouth, Fred has difficulty playing with others. In July 1999, he was charged with assault after kicking a security guard in the head during a Limp Bizkit concert.

Barbara's Breakdown: Fred is, unsurprisingly, a spaz. "He's on high voltage all the time," Barbara says. "It's a trigger always waiting to go off, and it doesn't take much. And the second he has some quasi-justified reason to attack, he will."

She Recommends: Toe-Bo. "I hope he has a really good physical fitness training program," she says. "If he ever did get to a psychologist...it would be really fascinating to see how much impulse control and how much judgment he has. His brain cells really might be turned over."

Eminem

Troubles With The Man: The angriest white man in rap has been a bad, bad boy. In one week in June 2000, he was brought up on two separate weapons charges—one for allegedly pistol-whipping a man he allegedly saw allegedly kissing his alleged wife, and the other for allegedly pulling a gun on Douglas Dail, a member of Insane Clown Posse's, er, posse.

Barbara's Breakdown: Insane in the membrane! "Pistol-whipping is pretty rough," she says. "When you get to weapons in this kind of thing, you know he's got some brain damage. Maybe somebody could harness this guy, but...he's kind of scary."

She Recommends: A whole different M&M—mentoring and medication. "With some mentorship I think he can come around," she says. (Dre doesn't count?) "Now of course, that's wishful thinking—he's got a lot of brain chemistry problems with the weapon thing." Barbara also recommends trying Ritalin and a good shrink.

Violent J (Insane Clown Posse)

Troubles With The Man: Like most clowns, Violent J's festive makeup hides a world of inner pain. In January 1998, J was charged with assault after he reportedly beat a man who he said made some unflattering remarks about his mother. He was also charged with assault for allegedly beating a fan who stole his shoe at a November 1997 ICP concert.

Barbara's Breakdown: Clown, calm down. "We all like to use apple pie and our mothers as excuses to be mad," she says. "Now he's talking about his shoe. So he's an angry situation waiting."

She Recommends: Therapy—J needs to learn the difference between the cartoonish antics of ICP and real life. "He could get a therapist that could literally help him work out his outer world versus his inner world. I would love for these guys to get in touch with their creative avenues versus the pain inside themselves."



"Lars Ulrich is like a dog peeing on a fire hydrant."



MOTHERSHIP LANDS IN MEXICO!



CHARLIE LANGELO

Titán is One Alien Nation Under a Groove.

The members of Titán are aliens in their own country. As metal, hip-hop and power pop dominate the Mexican youth-culture landscape, few music fans know what to make of three beings who beamed down from Planet Funk wielding samplers and Grooveboxes.

"We feel isolated in many ways," says guitarist Julian Lede. "We haven't played [shows] with a lot of bands." Brandishing a retro space-age collage of big beats and humorous samples, Titán (pronounced tee-TAHN) crafts a south-of-the-border response to the Beastie Boys' in-your-face silliness and Beck's cut 'n' paste dadaist kitsch.

"We're Mexicans, but you wouldn't be able to tell by our music," says keyboardist and electro-noise maker Emilio Acevedo. "We needed an international deal because the electronica scene in Mexico isn't strong."

When Titán began in the late '80s (under the name Melamina Ponderosa), listeners were just confused. Many Rock En Español fans still think the members don't know how to play music. "But the musicians in the scene respect us because they know what we were doing," Acevedo says. Even a record contract from BMG Mexico didn't help matters much. Alfonso André,

drummer of the legendary Mexican band Los Cafalanes, produced Titán's first Mexican full-length to a confounded response from both Mexican music fans and the label that struggled to market the release.

In 1991, bassist Andrés Sanchez dropped out and Jay de la Cueva (who as a pre-teen was in the boy band Microchips) replaced him. After flirtation with various labels during the early '90s, EMI recorded the trio's signature single "C'mon Feel The Noise" in '97, which lifts the symphonic funk riff from Starksy And Hutch's theme song, not the Slade anthem. By that time Titán had already attracted the attention of producers Craig Borrell and Ross Harris (known for their work with Sukia and DJ Me DJ You) and Michael Franti (of Spearhead and Disposable Heroes Of Hiphoprisy) who imbued an international flavor to the funkateers' new American debut, *Elevator* (Támbora!-Virgin).

"We love elevator music," admits Acevedo about the style that has given them international cult status. "And on TV you can hear music from cheap Mexican sci-fi films, or the telenovelas [soap operas]. We absorb everything." —Enrique Lavín

★ ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

LABEL PROFILE



ATARI TEENAGE RIOT

Hanin Elias (one-fourth of German anarchists Atari Teenage Riot) conceived of the Digital Hardcore Recordings imprint Fatal in the early '90s—hat on the heels of riot *grill* acts like Bikini Kill and Bratmobile. The 28-year-old singer had been increasingly disappointed with the direction of DHR, because "the boys were doing a competition thing, like, 'My record is harder than your record,' and 'I have more bpm's,' and 'Mine's noisier than yours.'" So she implemented her plan for a woman-centric label with the 1998 release of fellow ATR member Nic Endo's *White Heat* EP. "I thought maybe we [girls] should come together and show the boys what DHR could be if they stopped playing their games," she asserts. The recent release of Elias's solo album, *In Flames*, was closely followed by *Girls Fucking Shit Up*, the debut of screaming, slurring digital hard-pop group Lolita Storm, a band fronted by three women. While Elias has yet to sign other artists, she is always on the prowl. Her one criterion? The music just has to be intense. And true to her open-minded political ideals, it doesn't even have to be made by women: "I think Fatal is very important for DHR because it opens the gate for lots of new influences." Elias says. "In this way it's very anti-fascist." —Tamy Ware

WEIRD
RECORD

100,000

Leagues Under
My Nutsack

Scrotums and rock have always gone together like Cheech and Chong. Take Kid Rock's "Balls In Your Mouth" or Accept's "Balls To The Wall," for instance. But until the advent of Cleveland, Ohio's 100,000 Leagues Under My Nutsack, a band's never been daring enough to flaunt testicular pride in their bandname. Combining metal, punk, country and lo-fi Satan worship, the Nutsack boys are like Mr. Bungle minus the subtlety—every last one of the exquisitely titled *Welcome To The Fold's* (Flexovit) 148 minutes is fully scandalous, from the metal grind of "Legend Of The Chrome Nipple" to the washed-out echoes of "Licking The Balls Of Satan Out On The Open Highway." Their lyrics are alternately amusing and disgusting, often within the same song: The eight-minute piano ballad "Offerings Of The Finest Flesh," tickles the funny bone with "Your toes taste good, and they smell good too/ I want to sniff some really good glue," and then turns the stomach with "Young virgin flesh, I'd like a taste/ To scrape up your old fetal waste." Dinner, anyone? **—Tom Mallen**

100,000 LEAGUES UNDER MY NUTSACK



WELCOME TO THE FOLD

REVOLUTIONARY CUBAN



Up, Bustle And Out ain't no Buena Vista Social Club.

Call it the curse of the Buena Vista Social Club. Soon after the acid-jazz group Up, Bustle And Out finished its summit with a studio of Cuban musicians—which resulted in *Master Sessions 1*, Calle 23, Havana (Ninja Tune)—Buena Vista mania overtook NPR. For those happy to capitalize on trends, the phenomenon might seem like a blessing, but the Bristol-based members of UB&O worried that music fans wouldn't accept their unorthodox approach to Cuban music after falling in love with Buena Vista Social Club's reverent son.

"They worked so hard to keep things pure," says Up, Bustle And Out honcho and in-house philosopher Rupert Mould about Ry Cooder's all-star band. "We didn't want to do that. We didn't want to record anything that had been done before."

Mould's hands-on work with Cuban music dates back to 1997, when UB&O recorded *A Dream Of Land And Freedom*, an EP that honored the 30th anniversary of Che Guevara's death. After the members of UB&O donated the proceeds from the single to the state-run Sonocaribe Studio where they recorded it, the Cuban government invited them back to continue experimenting.

"I definitely wanted to play with a sound that was reminiscent of the Cuban *descarga* of the 1950s," says

Mould of his trip-hop-meets-*guajira* creations. "The studio and the equipment, all the old valves, reflected that—a more traditional sound." The union of lo-fi tech and wheezing instruments is alternately breezy and bouncy, but always laid-back, whether UB&O is reproducing traditional vocal and flute lines verbatim or layering hip-hop beats with ballpark organs and vibes.

Master Sessions is less a nostalgic flashback than an era-hopping volley between Up, Bustle And Out's breakbeat internationalism, Afro-Cuban drumming, sampled radio broadcasts from Radio Rebelde and an intergenerational squad of Cuban *descarga* players assembled by ex-Orquesta Aragon flautist Richard Egues (who also helped organize the Buena Vista Social Club). The cultural collisions left such an impression on Mould, an erstwhile academic, that he turned his experiences as a Brit in Cuba into a first-person travelogue, *The Rebel Radio Diary* (La Prensa Rebelde).

Explains Mould, "I was involved with the musicians but I was also just walking around and viewing, seeing the people and the culture and putting it together with the country's history. I never saw myself as an outsider. I was there enjoying a rare moment in the life of the country." **—Josh Kun**

CAN'T BUY ME LOVE

It was 60 years ago today—that is, if today is October 9th—that John Lennon was born (and about 20 since he was shot and killed by Mark David Chapman). What do you get for living and dying a working class hero? Well, Nike uses your tunes to sell sneakers, and your estate (yeah, *her*) licenses your name and artwork for plenty of knickknacks, instruments and baby clothing. On several occasions, Julian has blasted his stepmother's capricious use of The Walrus's doodles on ties, mugs, eyeglasses, etc. But all grumbling aside, Yoko does give some of the money to charity (for more about that, check out the Yoko Files at www.bbd-studios.com/yoko). So this year, while you do your seasonal shopping, imagine no possessions.



Gartlan pewter figurine (made out of recycled handguns), \$495 large, \$195 small.

John Lennon series Gibson J-160E, Fab Four model (also available in Magical Mystery Tour and Bed-In models), \$2000.



"Imagine" Gold Record, \$220 (limited edition of 9,500).

Carter's John Lennon baby shirt and shorts (featuring drawings John made for Sean), \$15.



Epiphone John Lennon "1965" Casino, \$2,995.



Gartlan "Happy Xmas" collector's plates, \$30 for the 8 1/8-inch plate and \$17 for the 3 1/8-inch plate.

Refrigerator magnet, \$2.50.



?&A: GUIDED BY VOICES' ROBERT POLLARD

Robert Pollard and Guided By Voices seem to release two or three albums every year, but for some, that's just not enough. So they're picking up the slack with *Suitcase: Failed Experiments And Trashed Aircraft*, a new four-CD set with 100 songs covering the last 26 or 27 years of Pollard's career, almost all of the tracks previously unreleased. An embarrassment of riches—or just embarrassing? The *Suitcase* proves to be a bit of both. —*Douglas Wolk*

Suitcase was originally rumored to be a 10-CD set, right?

I figured it was difficult enough to get through, so I cut it down a little bit. Matt Davis and Kevin Poindexter and I actually started about a year and a half ago, going through the actual suitcase, this big suitcase I have full of cassettes, just to catalog stuff so we could have it in case anything ever happened to the suitcase. We never got through all of it, but we found maybe 250 songs—the best stuff.

What kind of suitcase is it?

It's some kind of large metal briefcase. I got it from a factory where I used to work that made detonators for hand-grenades and guns. I think that's what it carried. It's a big suitcase—it probably held 150 to 200 90-minute cassettes in there. We used to get together every weekend and have what I called controlled jams, and try to come up with songs, with titles and everything. Some of the cassettes were just these controlled jams, and some songs came from those. Others were actual outtakes from four-track sessions or studio sessions we'd done—there's a large variety of stuff. I took all the stuff I wanted out. Then I went on tour, and when I came back, my basement had flooded, and the rest of the tapes had fallen into the flood.... There was a possibility of a *Suitcase II*, but I think we lost a lot of it in the flood. It's almost a sign: "That's it, man, no more, please."

How far back do the recordings go?

The oldest thing on the box is a song called "Little Jimmy The Giant," by Little Bobby Pop. I think I did that some time in high school. I have stuff older than that, I just don't have it recorded. Most of the rest are



from around the *Bee Thousand* period, and right before that. And there's some stuff that's very recent, done as demos for the upcoming GBV record. When we practice, I sing all these songs I used to sing when I was a kid, "Corn Country" and "Planet Mars" and "Eggs Make Me Sick" and "Imagination".... We're talking about doing an EP or LP to sell on the roof of all these ridiculous songs.

How many songs does GBV have in all? There's some Web site that's catalogued 557 songs.

Is that before *Suitcase*? Well, tack on another hundred. After the fifth album, I counted how many songs we had—after *Propeller*, we had close to 100 songs, and I thought "I want to record more songs than the Beatles did." I think we've done that now. Did you hear the abridged version [the vinyl-only *Drinks And Deliveries*]? I think that's a pretty listenable record. A few years back, that could've legitimately been a GBV record. That's why we did that, so there'd be at least one record you could put on. *Suitcase* is pretty difficult to get through—you need to be in the mood, or you need to get stoned. It's mostly for the fans, something for them to discuss and analyze until we put out the next GBV record, which probably won't be out until 2001.

What's the longest it's ever taken you to write a song?

Well, occasionally I'll write suites—put two or three songs together—and it takes me a while. But my philosophy is that if it takes me too long to write a song, it's probably not worth writing.

IN MY ROOM TRANS AM



The three groovniks in Trans Am have spent more than a couple of records crossing Kraftwerk with ZZ Top. That tweaked sense of style extends to their new effort, *Red Line* (Thrill Jockey)—a more fully realized vision of synth-spiked rock 'n' roll—as well as to their decorating

focus: The boys recently spent some time fixing up the bathroom in their Washington, D.C. National Recording Studio. Here, multi-instrumentalist Nathan Means uncovers the secrets of the band's loo faster than a brigade of scrubbing bubbles. —*Mikael Wood*

PRETTY COLORS I painted this room when we were converting the studio from an artist space to a musician space. It was white and I painted it this dark, wet blue that I thought most resembled "Yes Klein International Blue." It was a terrifying process: The more I painted, the smaller and smaller the room looked. So we had to can the blue except on the ceiling. I painted the walls an early spring green and [bandmates] Sebastian (Thompson) and Philip (Manley) found some really ugly brown rock-style linoleum which we put on the floor. So it looked just like the outdoors.

SHRINE TO EASY LISTENIN' On the wall is a small poster of the Carpenters, which means little to me. Phil put it there. They look great, though.

SHRINE TO UNEASY RECORDING Next to [the Carpenters] is a picture of Plantain Studios where we mixed our last record, *Futureworld*. It was a beautiful, brand new facility. Actually it was a little too new, since requests like, "Can we get some compression on the drums" would be met by, "Yeah, just a second." Then a team of engineers would come in and spend 45 minutes hooking up the compressor. Those were heady days.

READING MATERIAL There's a big pile of British music magazines on the floor. I read *Mojo* a lot because I still can't believe that someone runs feature-length articles on Led Zepplin's Welsh countryside retreat, Brionycur. Or puts Janis Joplin on their cover.

INDIE-ROCK BEAUTY SECRETS In the medicine cabinet are an assortment of make-ups that I like to use for photo shoots: white and black lipstick, hair gog, talcum powder, cherry throat spray and some wet naps. We used to have some Diazepam, but I guess someone who wasn't distracted enough by the decorations finished them off.

5 things you should know about CARL CRAIG

Following the career of Detroit DJ and producer Carl Craig hasn't exactly been easy, since he's adopted numerous pseudonyms over the years. Including Paperclip People, Psyche and 69. But at the same time, Craig is nearly ubiquitous in the dance underground, nurturing a myriad of fledgling artists on his renowned Planet E label and more recently on his hip-hop imprint, Antidote.

Don't call Carl techno.

"I'm not following any particular style of music. I'm not techno, I'm not jazz. I'm just me. Like with Antidote, my original concept was to do techno-meets-Ghostface Killah. A lot of guys, like Timbaland, are integrating aspects of techno into their music, whether or not they want to accept it."

The hair pick helps with alien transmissions.

"It's my communication to an outside planet, kind of my internal cellular radar system. Basically, it's a direct link to my head. Everything that comes in through the receptor goes through the steel of the pick and then seeps into my brain. Right now I don't have it 'cause I don't want to be bothered."

Carl boasts an impressive techno resume, though.

In the late '80s, he was the apprentice of none other than Derrick May, a.k.a. Rhythm Is Rhythm—one of the founding fathers of Detroit techno. "I was part of Rhythm Is Rhythm after the fact. I worked on the remake of [the seminal techno track] 'Strings Of Life' in '89."

The new CD *Designer Music: The Remixes Vol. One* is a history lesson.

Craig's dusted off some old 12-inches dating back as far as 1992 and assembled them for easy digital listening on his new mix CD. Selecting artists as diverse as Johnny Blas, Spacetime Continuum, Alexander Robotnik and BT, it's obviously not about sticking to a singular style. "Why BT? Well, why not? 'Cause he's *corry* or something? I like the mix."

Just say no to fuchsia garters.

"Detroit has always been such a dress-to-impress kind of joint. It's always been infamous for pink suits and fuchsia garters—a lot of people want to dress like Evander Holyfield. We also have something called the 'Hair Wars,' which is kind of the flamboyant heterosexual version of *Paris Is Burning*: sculpting your hair into the Eiffel Tower or a propeller or something, and then going out to show off. But my take on fashion is fun. I'll wear something nobody wears in Detroit, like Prada or Costume National. Or Mi-Mu." Craig also wore his bathrobe to the Planet E Winter Music Conference party in Miami earlier this year. "With Prada slippers," he points out. —Adrienne Day

13 WAYS TO BLEED ON STAGE

COLD



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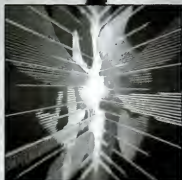
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| October 8 | Toronto |
| October 10 | Boston |
| October 11 | New York |
| October 12 | New York |
| October 13 | Philadelphia |
| October 14 | Washington |



OUT:

August 22

FILE UNDER:

Turntable all-stars, youth division

R.I.Y.L.:

The X-terminators, Deep Concentration, Mixmaster Mike

THE ALLIES

D-Day
Asphodel

The youngest member of the Allies may not be able to buy cigarettes yet, but he can man the turntables with supreme skill. And that goes for the rest of this cadre of young DJ virtuosos. Separately, the six members (Craze, A-Trak, Develop, Infamous, J-Smoke and Spikatakular) hold an impressive list of world and regional turntable titles that justify the group's titular nod to those who won World War II, but D-Day is more than a DJ battle album. Sure, there are a few nods to hip-hop braggadocio—as on J-Smoke's "Ready For War"—but overall, the traditional turntable paradigms are upended in favor of a futuristic outlook. The collaborative tracks are particularly commanding, with a precise collusion of elements that say as much with spatial interaction as they do with DJ prowess. The title track moves from the stark sonic environs of tech-step bassline flickers to howling guerrilla scratches. A-Trak doesn't cover as much ground with "All Hail To My Hands" but succeeds at focusing on mood with the mingling of sped-up piano keys and echoing chords. Craze has the last word on "Freedom Of Speech," with its sub-bass Jeep beats, hyperdrive scratching and a word collage that is wryly humorous and refreshingly self-deprecating. »Kuri Kondrak



OUT:

August 1

FILE UNDER:

Blunted jazz-hop

R.I.Y.L.:

DJ Shadow, DJ Krush, DJ Food

DJ CAM

Loa Project (Volume II)
Six Degrees

The first volume of DJ Cam's *Loa Project* recordings may indeed exist, but who outside of Cam has heard it is anyone's guess. The mysterious tracks do serve a purpose, though—they resulted in the voodoo influences Cam claims guided *Loa Project (Volume II)*. Those elements remain somewhat muffled in the music here, and are really only revealed in song titles like "Voodoo Jazz" and "Angel Heart." Musically, *Loa Project* is really more of a return to the instrumental hip-hop stylings that were the trademark of Cam's 1995 debut, *Underground Vibes*. But the Paris-based artist also lays claim to a fusion-istic approach that embraces elements of electronica, R&B and world music. "Mental Invasion" is a filtered funk joint worthy of DJ Premier, while "DJ Cam Sound System" fuses Moodyman-like loops with Jamaican dancehall vocal snippets. Cam's taste for jazz surfaces on two relatively upbeat tracks: the aforementioned "Voodoo Jazz," a mass of stuttered percussion, jagged bassline and keyboard stabs; and "Juliet," which utilizes a double-time rhythm to meld live strings and bass with sampled piano and horns. But it's the lone vocal track, "You Do Something To Me," that really stands out, as Cam bounces clipped bling-bling beats under singer China's bilingual R&B croon. »Kuri Kondrak



OUT:

September 12

FILE UNDER:

Cuban country gumbo

R.I.Y.L.:

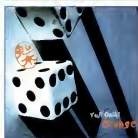
Buena Vista Social Club, Celia Cruz, Afro-Cuban All Stars

MARIA OCHOA Y CORAZON DE SON

Asi Quiero Vivir
Blue Jacket

There may be a downside to the explosion of international interest in Cuban music, but this lively and heartfelt performance by a veteran singer and ace group of sidemen represents yet another highlight in the post-Buena Vista boom. Maria Ochoa, 56, belts out son and related Cuban folk music forms (*guaracha*, *sucucu*), with unbridled confidence and humor, as her parents did and as she has for decades in Santiago de Cuba, the city on Cuba's eastern shore that has been a cultural and musical crossroads for centuries. Son is a mesmerizing blend of European and Caribbean sounds, with swaying, lightly drawn rhythms that nevertheless spring from deeply soulful foundations. Tresero Rey Cabreba Castelanos plucks bright guitar figures over congas, bongos and timbales to kick off many of the 14 cuts, while Buena Vista vet Eliades Ochoa (Maria's brother and a monumental figure in championing Cuba's more traditional sounds) plays guitar on two tracks. The call-and-response choruses between Maria Ochoa and the boys in the band tell of lovely mountain landscapes and long days of hard work, or warn dancers of their partners' roving hands. With Ochoa's strong voice, which does not quite rival the great Celia Cruz in terms of richness or command, and the flawless accompaniment, *Asi Quiero Vivir* comes off as joyous and sophisticated music from the heart of the Cuban countryside. »Bill Kishuk





YUJI ONIKI ★

Orange

Future Farmer

At first blush, San Francisco-based songwriter Yuji Oniki's debut reads like another twee trifle: His breathy, Ric Menck-circa-'87 voice and chiming guitar tone are typical of the genre. But listen harder and on several counts *Orange* reveals itself to be a cut above the indie-pop-with-stuff-on-top norm. First, it's unusually well-arranged, with contributions from Beulah trumpeter Bill Swan and Guided By Voices/ex-Cobra Verde guitarist Doug Gillard actually serving the songs rather than being grafted-on afterthoughts. Second, there's the songwriting itself. "Elements" and "Tomorrow Stays" are plenty catchy, but more importantly, Oniki checks the fructose content via concrete observation ("I keep staring through the window where the tangerines drop") and some unusual topics. "Blink" simply describes a series of snapshots ("Here's a boy and girl/ Polaroid tinted green"), while the deceptively jaunty "Paper Tigers" traces Japanese history from the fall of feudalism to more recent events ("Patriots and bubblegum/ Come right after the bomb"). The penultimate "Last Days" is a song about the inadequacy of language, matching method to message with a detached, single-word chorus: "Fascination." At eleven songs (including a reprise of the Japanese chorus of "Tokyo Clover"), *Orange* could use a few more segments, but this is a good sign: It's not often one wishes this sort of record were longer. »»Franklin Bruno

OUT:

August 1

FILE UNDER:

Homemade pop

R.I.Y.L.:

Guided By Voices, Beulah, Velvet

Crush



RADIOHEAD

Kid A

Capitol

For a band that boasts not two but three guitarists, Radiohead's *Kid A* is surprisingly guitar-free. Thom Yorke and co. have eschewed *OK Computer*'s chiming strings in favor of atmospheric keyboards and synthetic beats—but while the sounds have changed, the challenging and intelligent quality of their music remains the same. "Idiotique" pulses with thunderous, dancefloor-friendly bass-drum patterns, and on "Kid A," Yorke's computerized, unintelligible vocals hover in a swirling sea of toy pianos and fractured breaks. Lyrics receive a similar overhaul, as straightforward ideas are replaced with abstract imagery: "Everything In Its Right Place" endlessly repeats phrases like "Yesterday I woke up sucking a lemon" and "The National Anthem" plows through two short verses, devolving into a cacophonous jam complete with a distorted eight-piece horn section. The conventional Radiohead sound isn't totally absent, however. The guitar- and string-based "How To Disappear Completely" is as heartbreaking as anything from *OK Computer*, and "Optimistic" finds them expanding their three-guitar vocabulary to include tribal rhythms and—gasp!—funk. The only disappointing thing about *Kid A* is that 20-odd tracks didn't make the cut—many of those will be released next spring, but are already available as live MP3s. »»Tom Mallon

OUT:

October 3

FILE UNDER:

Abstract electro-pop

R.I.Y.L.:

UNKLE, Portishead, the Beta Band



SAMIAM

Astray

Hopeless

You'd think Samiam might get discouraged that pals Green Day and former tour-openers Blink-182 are almost as prevalent on the pop scene as boy bands, while they themselves remain, uh, under that radar. There's no sign of despair, though, on the California-based band's sixth longplayer. Instead, the Samiam boys tear through the punkish pop thing far better than their mainstream peers, even though they were wrangling a record out of major label purgatory while Blink were running neckid on MTV. Samiam makes a smarter, deeper and all the while catchier kind of rawk, filled with dirty guitars and pummeling drums, and still overflowing with tasty-as-fuck sing-along choruses. Jason Beebout's vocals ride between the squeaky-clean pop croon and the endearing frayed snarl that gives the post-hardcore set its grit—and that complements the shifts between sweetly-plucked guitars on tracks like "Curbside," and grinding distorted attacks on "Wisconsin" and "Bird Bath" unerringly. The basic idea behind pop-punk was to smash the best parts of both ideas together; most punkpoppers just glop mediocre-but-hook-laden tunes over a snotty attitude. Samiam, however, has played top-notch melodic punk for more than 10 years—and on *Astray*, they continue to show the kids how it's done. »»Nicole Keiper

OUT:

August 29

FILE UNDER:

Pop-punk the way it should be done

R.I.Y.L.:

Face to Face, Lifetime, Quicksand





OPM

"OPM, it's basically like ekum—addictive fuckin' shit," boasts MC Matthew, explaining the name of his band, skate-rock's "studio gangstas." Initially founded by Matthew and his brother-in-law, MC John e. necro, as a hip-hop project with a healthy appreciation for Sublime-style reggae, the duo quickly called on John's guitar-slinging homie Casper to bring out their sun-soaked influences. Tapping John's contacts from his days as an Island Records talent scout, the two-month-old posse parked its homespun rap-reggae drive-by on the desk of Atlantic A&R executive VP Craig Kallman. Who you know may open doors, but writing addictive tunes keeps

your extremities from being shut in them. The native Californians' baggy beats and flowy rhymes owe more to verse-chorus pop than to vamping grinds—OPM's Atlantic debut, *Menace To Sobriety*, may just hit a vein with Kid Rock fanatics. For now, the guys are happy that their first single, "Heaven Is A Halfpipe," is getting some air-radio love. "We were rehearsing in this shitty seaweed-drying room," Matthew recalls, "the reality of our careers moving anywhere hadn't set in and then all of a sudden I heard Johnny: 'Hey, you guys got to come out here. We came outside and the song was playing out of his car on the radio. We were like, 'Holy shit!'" —Lorne Behrman



JILL SCOTT

Even if you haven't heard Jill Scott's voice, you've probably appreciated her talent. The 28-year-old Philly girl co-wrote The Roots' Grammy-winning rap single "You Got Me." Perhaps it's only appropriate that celebration of Scott's abilities should precede her recorded debut, since the gregarious, grinning soul singer has always had a shy side. As a child, she only sang in her room: "I'd put things up against the door so nobody could hear," she confides. She's opened up quite a bit since then, and *Who Is Jill Scott? Words And Sounds Vol. 1* (Hidden Beach) bristles with startlingly intimate details of livin', lovin', tussin' and flightin' related in Scott's smooth, booty-bouncing R&B croon. Her childhood cautiousness isn't completely gone, though. Hanging around town with her producer, notable fellow Philadelphian DJ Jazzy Jeff, brought some of it back. "Jazzy Jeff was driving me home and this lady jumped out of her car, and her kid was in the backseat, and she screamed 'DJ Jazzy Jeff, I love you,'" recalls Scott, who'd prefer her success to come in a slow build. "I'm sure she appreciated his work, but to jump out of her car and leave her kid.... He'll go into Wal-Mart and they'll announce his name: 'DJ Jazzy Jeff' is now in Wal-Mart." I don't want that." —Brian Howard



NOTHINGFACE

In Charles Dickens's novel *Great Expectations*, an ex-con financially supports young scallywag Pip, helping him become a gentleman. When Nothingface's tour van recently broke down, an ex-con released from a maximum-security prison helped tow the Washington, D.C.-based quartet, rescuing the band from missing their slot on the Tattoo The Earth rock 'n' ink fest at New Jersey's Giants Stadium. These metal-hungry mantoes weathered the stress like fine young gentlemen. "There's no stress! It's our job," assures bassist Bill Gool. Later on, the band's combination of blood-row riffage, beautiful melodies, demented screaming and ongelic singing incited the mosh pit to scorching-hot levels with only a three-song mini-set. "We make the best of the time we've got," figures new drummer Tommy Suckles, "and give off an energy that [the crowd] can relate to." Fans of provocative literature will surely appreciate the band's online journal (at www.nothingface.net) and the great expectations it sets forth for *Violence*, Nothingface's first album forTVT and third overall. "The album has big gigantic balls that hang down to the floor," reads the June 29th entry, complementing the mixdown contributions of David Bottrill (known for his work with Tool). "It will definitely destroy some stereotypes!" Dickens would be proud. —Amy Sclaretto



ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

CAPITOL EYE

"This band is similar to Mike Tyson back in his days when he was vicious, hungry and knocking out anybody who stepped in the ring," Capitol Eye vocalist I-Man coolly asserts. Credence for that claim can be found on the one-year-old rap-metal posse's output, including a six-song EP, a 15-song full-length and a series of road-christening appearances on the Napster-sponsored Back To Basics tour with Limp Bizkit and Cypress Hill. Of course, it doesn't hurt to have the Long Beach Dub Allstars as homies, a manager named Dr. Kavorkian and hip-hop cred. In the mid-'90s, I-Man busted three albums' worth of rhymes with Tha Mexakinz. A so-called "PhD in hip-hop" is what distinguishes this live-band venture from the current onslaught of MC-fronted headbangers, he says. The quintet's 77 Records debut, *Mood Swingz*, is more a low-riding, well-threaded rap album played over trad rock instrumentation than a thrash record. Capitol Eye's idea of hell is haunting, grooved-out jams that veer in simple sophistication from jazz to curdled funk. Reflecting on the future, the tiger of Capitol Eye says, "We're just trying to get up here with the big boys and let them know this band is here to stay and is serious about this game." —Lorne Behrman





OUT from

UNDER

With Underworld split into two syndicates, which will rule the future of tripped-out techno?



STORY: STEVE GDULA

AMICABLE. That's the official word from both sides of the Underworld breakup. After 10 years of collaboration, Darren Emerson left to pursue a career as a producer, DJ and solo artist. Remaining bandmembers Karl Hyde and Rick Smith decided at the time to continue performing and recording using the Underworld moniker. But as is often the case, the official statements pale when discussing the break with the estranged bandmates. Surprise: Everything wasn't exactly rosy in Underworld.

"It was time to move on," Emerson says. "I wasn't happy there no more. I want to write good music. And I think when you're happy, you write good music." Currently, he's on tour promoting *Uruguay*, his contribution to the Studio K7 Global Underground DJ series, producing acts like Meeker for his own label, Underwater, and writing material for a solo studio release. He's also recorded with Sasha (of Sasha And Digweed); the fruit of their labor, *Scorpio*, is already climbing the Radio One charts in the UK.

While Emerson is excited about spreading his creative wings, Hyde and Smith are looking forward to getting back to the one-on-one dialogue they began almost 20 years ago as co-founding members of Underworld.

"We can move easier between mediums and not have to consider treading on people's toes," Hyde explains, in a separate conversation, of his and Smith's new freedom. "It was important not to impose the work [Rick and I] were doing in [our design firm] Tomato, or as installation artists, on Darren—just as he never imposed his DJing on us." However, as most Underworld fans know, the band didn't succeed critically or commercially until Emerson joined for their third album

Dubnobasswithmyheadman. Hyde and Smith will be playing live dates to promote *Everything, Everything*, (JBO-V2) the live CD/DVD testimony of the last Underworld tour as a trio. The DVD version of *Everything*, *Everything* allows users to jam with recorded live tracks, resplice the concert clips to create a personalized running order and log onto the Underworld Web site.

Hyde says the arrival of the live disc, which comes off like an epic swan song for Underworld as a trio, had nothing to do with Emerson's departure. "We had no idea that the band was going to transform in the particular way that it did," Hyde avers, noting that the project was initiated by Smith more than a year ago. He's also eager to point out the change in Underworld's sound since Emerson's departure: "It's turned into something that I couldn't have imagined before," he says excitedly. "It's so enjoyable—the experience of the two of us on stage. People are saying it's groovier, it's deeper, it's funkier."

Though the future looks bright for everyone post-split, they do take their turns reflecting on their earlier relationship. "Darren stopped talking to us earlier in the year," Hyde offers bluntly. "At this point, we have to respect that he wants his space. He's my friend. Any time he wants to talk, it's going to be good." Emerson admits that he'll miss "being on stage, jamming with the boys." And both parties say they're doing just fine on their own, thank you very much. Emerson's inspiration for leaving the band came down to very plausible, if not necessarily amicable reasoning: "I've never toured as a DJ. I've always done the Underworld thing. What I'm gonna do is go out and have a good time, without no stress, without the grief, and look forward to having a nice future doing things that I want to do."

MM

angel from sin city

Julieta Venegas learned a lot in Tijuana, especially the border trade of Mexican and American influences.

STORY: ENRIQUE LAVIN

Musical influences pass through the bustling US/Mexico border city of Tijuana like black-market goods.

"You had a choice between seeing bands like Maldita Vecindad and Café Tacuba when they came to Tijuana, or you could cross the border and see the Sugarbushes or Lou Reed," says Julieta Venegas. Because of so many possibilities, she adds, "rock fans are more demanding in Tijuana than anywhere else in Mexico."

Destiny almost dictated that Venegas, who cites Suzanne Vega, Nina Simone, Stevie Wonder and Argentine rock godfather Charly García as influences, should become a musician. Her mother regularly serenaded the family with Latin boleros; meanwhile, Julieta fell in love with the piano at age nine, calling it her "loyal friend" as she trained to become a classical pianist. "I liked the intense Russian composers," remembers the 29-year-old.

As a teenager, Julieta transferred her love for intense music from classical to political ska-punk fusion, joining the seminal band Tijuana No! as keyboardist and vocalist. She penned the band's only hit, "Pobre De Ti" before eventually taking off to Mexico City in search of another group.

"I had to start from scratch," she says, calling up the seven years since she moved there. "I tried forming a band, but I ended up playing concerts by myself with my piano." In a crowded rock scene dominated by *muchos machos*, her 1998 solo debut album *Aquí* impressed the Spanish-language rock circuit with its intimate folk-rock quality and her lush voice, as well as her use of accordion.

"Many people thought that I picked up the accordion because I was from the north of Mexico," she says, working to disabuse the notion that she was influenced by the polka-sounding *norteña* bands. "In reality, I needed more mobility. I looked at Los Lobos and Tom Waits, who used the accordion in a strange, gypsy-like way, and I found that I could compose with it."

For her latest album, *Bueninvento* (BMG U.S. Latin), she was ready for another change, so she picked up the acoustic guitar. She also invited a few like-minded artists, including guitarist Joe Gore (Waits, P.J. Harvey), drummer Joey Waronker (Beck) and Quique Rangel and Emmanuel del Real (Café Tacuba) to bring their inventiveness to the aptly titled record, which translates as "good invention."

"I really wanted an album that I could have fun with live," she says of her switch from *Aquí*'s intimacy to an edgy, hard-driving melodicism underscored by her soaring voice. On the title track, Venegas sings over a Ray Manzarek-like piano line about how a good idea lurks in the shadows of her mirror. When it reveals itself, she proclaims: "Good invention comforts my solitude/ Good invention you quiet my anxiety." "I usually make up all the characters in my songs, but this one really makes fun of Julieta," she admits.

Venegas has often been compared to P.J. Harvey, which she takes as a compliment. It's other comparisons she's afraid of: "When I first played a concert in Spain, they were amazed that I could write and play my own music," she says, explaining how Mexico has made a cottage-industry from pretty singers interpreting others' music. "Just don't compare me to Britney Spears."

NMM





the telltale heartbreaker

For twang-rock troublemaker **Ryan Adams**, big-city life is easier than living in Whiskeytown

STORY: MEREDITH OCHS PHOTO: JASON TODD

Driving around where I grew up, I wouldn't be shocked to see some guy naked and drunk in his front yard in the dead of summer, hosing himself down with a hose in one hand and shooting off a firearm up in the air with the other."

Ryan Adams is mucking up memories about his native Jacksonville, North Carolina with the earthy embellishment he's known for. Credit that penchant for tall tales to his good old-fashioned Southern upbringing: "In the South, you have to make a lot of stuff up," Adams explains. "The nights are long and quiet and pretty dark. Superstitions and stories are there to keep you sane."

Perhaps Adams's two-and-a-half year tenure in the tell-it-like-it-is town of New York City is the reason his solo debut, *Heartbreaker* (Bloodshot), boasts few fish stories. A stripped-down, mostly acoustic affair that unfolds with each listen, the album delivers rollicking, raspy love songs, straight-ahead country ballads and Dylan-inflected folk numbers. The Big Apple "grew me up," the 25-year-old reckons. "As a Southerner who likes to tell stories and exaggerate, I was Pinocchio up there. But after I left, I didn't have to be."

While driving down the East Coast last March with no specific destination, Adams concluded there were a number of things he didn't have to be, including the leader of Whiskeytown, the country-rock group many had named most likely to break out of their pigeonhole. "We were supposed to be the alt.country Nirvana. I guess I was supposed to hang myself with a banjo string," Adams says wryly. Though Whiskeytown has a double album in the can, the band's frontman, who is already making plans to record another solo record, is uncertain about the band's future. "I think we're all ready to not do it for a while," he acknowledges. "I don't know if I have the energy to be a rhythm guitarist and frontperson in a rock band. I feel like I have more to offer."

"We were supposed to be the alt.country Nirvana. I guess I was supposed to hang myself with a banjo string."

Indeed, *Heartbreaker* is proof that the praise heaped on Adams is justified, with or without Whiskeytown. His angst, punk-boy singing has yielded to a rich, honeyed drawl occasionally stung by heartbreak or failure. "To Be Young (is to be sad, is to be high)" is a Sun Studios-meets-Boyce-and-Hart romp, while the aching, Gram Parsons-influenced "Oh My Sweet Carolina" features the distinct harmonies of Emmylou Harris, with whom Adams performed at the Sessions At West 54th Parsons tribute ("I was so nervous about singing with her I had to take half a Valium and half a beer," he says). The Appalachian-tinged "Bartering Lines" bears the stamp of his partners in crime, prodigious roots duo Gillian Welch and David Rawlings, who helped coax Adams to Nashville.

Though happy to be back on Southern soil for now, Adams says he'll return to New York—"I fell right in love with it," he says—but is hesitant to say just when. "I have ideas about what I'd like to do, but they don't seem to dictate what happens in the real world," he says. "The real world puts me under its arm and takes off for the touchdown."

NMM



MAD MAX

When Max Cavalera left Sepultura and went tribal, everyone thought he'd lost his mind. Instead, he found **Soulfly**.

STORY: LORNE BEHRMAN PHOTOS: CHARLIE LANGELLA

Who would have imagined that *At Play In The Fields Of The Lord* would impact the future of metal? Based loosely on Peter Matthiessen's novel about North American missionaries' attempts to convert the natives and the local soldiers' violent reaction, Hector Babenco's 1991 *Heart Of Darkness*-like tale totally changed the way Soulfly frontman Max Cavalera approaches music.

When Brazilian native Cavalera saw the movie, he was five albums and 11 years deep into a successful thrash-metal career with Sepultura, a band he formed with his skin-pounding brother Igor back in 1984. While still fronting that revered church of doom (which counted Metallica and Megadeth among its many fans), Cavalera decided to change course and explore his ancestry, brilliantly defying metal conventions along the way.

★ ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

An Indian tribal percussion ensemble joined Sepultura for the 1996 album *Roots*, which has grown into a classic reference point for nu metal. Korn's Jonathan Davis appeared on the record, and the music's expansive ethnic flavors and primal poundings laid the blueprint for acts such as Slipknot, Limp Bizkit and the Deftones.

"That movie had such a deep impact on me, and after, I felt like joining the Indians," Cavaleria says. "I told Gloria [Cavaleria, Max's manager and now wife] I wanted to go to Brazil and record with a tribe. She was like, 'Whoa, wait a minute, man, you got to think about this one. You're not Michael Jackson—we don't have that budget.'" Determination eventually made that inter-cultural jam session happen, but also contributed to his leaving Sepultura after *Roots* over artistic, business and personal conflicts.

This Saturday's Sabbath is being held Black Sabbath-style, at the Ozfest in Camden, New Jersey. Soulfly headlines the second stage at 6:05 p.m. Before the show, Cavaleria is lounging in the corner of the bus's U-shaped couch. Next to him is a dresser-like table, on which sits a copy of the Beatles' *Revolver*. If Cavaleria looks comfortable chatting in the posh posterior of his maroon tour bus, it's not because of its plush, brown velvet—it's because he's with his family and bandmates, his clan. He wears baggy black cargo pants, sandals and a black sweatshirt with red and white piping. Thick dreads clump like swatches of steel wool, framing his storied and sunburned face.

Cavaleria's tribal connections go beyond a movie or posse. Cavaleria's mother is a priestess of the Candomblé religion (a mix of Catholicism and African religions) and she raised her son in an environment of otherworldly rituals and God-loving enlightenment. Cavaleria says he started thanking the Mighty One through his music after Sepultura's *Chaos A.D.* (1993).

On their 1998 self-titled debut, Soulfly took Sepultura's innovations global, throwing Jamaican and African percussion into the mix along with traditional Brazilian instrumentation like the one-stringed berimbau and the booming tambour drum. The band also modernized it with samples, raps and electronic ambience. Several critics called it cluttered and patchy. Cavaleria considers it his exorcist record—it got rid of the Sepultura demons—and candidly admits the album was overly ambitious at 15 songs and perhaps slightly indulgent in its use of Portuguese.

This year's sophomore effort, *Primitive* (Roadrunner), is a streamlined version of Cavaleria's vision, where left-field goodies like a gospel choir, reggae interludes and a Sean Lennon cameo don't jolt you into forgetting you're listening to a record with brutal, death-metal extremities. It's a top-notch collection of devil-horned grooves and smoothly orchestrated surprises.

He attributes *Primitive*'s cohesion to recording near home, at Phoenix, Arizona's Salt Mine Studios. (He's been living in Phoenix for a decade now.) "My ideas were all at home—it's almost like the headquarters of this album. Outside, by the foosball table, I had notes of what I needed to do—the walls were covered with people's phone numbers and things to do."

Cavaleria's influential work on *Roots* elevated him to a shaman of

new noise, and when he formed Soulfly, elite members of the nu-metal congregation paid their respects by appearing on both of the new outfit's records. Fred Durst of Limp Bizkit, vocalist Corey (Æ) of Slipknot and Deftones vocalist Chino Moreno are all down.

Cavaleria has had a "come on down" recording attitude with friends and people whose talent he admires. Starting with Sepultura's *Beneath The Remains*, he has worked with Faith No More's Mike Patton, Jello Biafra and Cypress Hill's Eric Bobo, to name a few.

"Son Song," which features Sean Lennon, stands out as the boldest collaboration on *Primitive*. Cavaleria met the rock hero last year during Australia's Big Day Out festival. Besides a mutual appreciation for each other's work, they felt a spiritual bond—both lost their fathers at a young age. Each addresses that loss on "Son Song." Sean plays plaintive keyboards and sings with Lennon-patented mellow milkiness and Max is Max, effusing scrubbed-raw vocals and bowels-in-a-blender guitars. The two complement one another with a cathartic build-up/let-up chemistry.

"It was kind of a crazy idea. [Sean and I] spent a lot of time sitting down with an acoustic guitar jamming and writing lyrics and stuff. I took Sean to the mountains—it was a little bit like a hippie vibe, but cool, peaceful, we could just concentrate on the song."

The logo from *At Play In The Fields Of The Lord* is a silhouette of an Indian man aiming his bow and arrow towards the predatory plane above. When Cavaleria first hits the stage, the headpiece of his green and yellow, Brazilian flag-design guitar points to the heavens. He announces Soulfly's arrival, wrenches feedback from his guitar, and leans in hard to "Eye For An Eye," off Soulfly's debut. It's the only song that deals directly with his Sepultura split; he also plays "Bleed," which addresses the death of his closest friend (and stepson) Dana Wells, who was killed in a mysterious gang-related car accident/murder.

The Soulfly audience isn't exactly tribal—they're more like typical-maned metalheads and their short-haired, cyber-vibing nu-metal counterparts. But there's an unspoken respect evident as they try to sing along in Portuguese to "Umbabaruma," headbanging to the five-man tribal drum jam. They bang and bob in approval to naked versions of "Back To The Primitive" and "Bleed," which even along with their eclectic studio-experimental dressings are straightforward, at least relative to "Fly High," which features gospel vocals and "In Memory Of..." which has silky, De La Soul-like rhymes courtesy of Phoenix locals Cuthroth Logic.

Cavaleria still isn't sure how the masses and critics will receive his musical concoctions. "When I did *Roots*, the same questions arose and I saw some horrible reviews," he said earlier, before taking the stage. "Some guy gave it a 'U' and said, 'fuckin' Max lost his mind, fuckin' Max lost his mind, what the fuck's he doing with a bunch of Indians?'"

In *At Play In The Fields Of The Lord*, one of the army vets, Moon, a descendent of the Amazonian Indians, has difficulty grappling with his cultural conflicts, and eventually goes tribal, parachuting from his plane to join the Indians below. Eyeing Cavaleria's smiling son Igor (hiding behind his father's amp), drummer Joe Nunez's Soulfly necklace, and bassist Marcello Dias's pregnant wife (leaning on her husband's amp), it's clear Max didn't lose his mind. He just found a new tribe.

MM





2005

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**MAKING MUSIC THIS HARD ISN'T EASY. BUT WHEN
RONI SIZE FREES HIS MIND, YOUR ASS WILL FOLLOW.**

STORY: ANGUS BATEY

PHOTOS:

DERRICK SANTINI

GRADING:

BRENT PANKHURST

FOR ADAMS, LONDON

★ ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD



nce you get up the hill that Roni Size's three-story Georgian house is built on, you can see for miles beyond Bristol's St. Andrews district. If you've ever listened closely to the warm, stylish lines of *New Forms*, the blue and white interior décor of its mastermind's home will come as little surprise. Like that plaudt-garnering debut album by Size's collective Reprazent, the rooms are sparse yet comfortable, clean though intermittently cluttered and very much lived-in.

A hanging garden of backstage passes and laminates loops over a shelf bracket by the back door of the bright kitchen; a pair of decks sits on a cabinet full of vintage vinyl in a rumpus room that looks like it's been waiting a while for someone to organize it.

"I moved here in '98 and I'm still trying to get it fucking right," sighs Size, a compact, muscular-looking figure dressed in a black Nike vest, skull cap and shades. He pulls up a chair by the small round table in his backyard and adds, "But I don't get quality time with nobody or nothing, apart from my work." His punishing schedule has taken its toll lately, with the last two weeks spent recovering from exhaustion and walking pneumonia that caused performance cancellations at both the Montreaux Jazz and Japan's Fuji Festivals.

Still, Size has plenty to show for his work ethic. The new Reprazent material promises one of the most forward-looking and impressive records of 2000. Colored by hip-hop and rattling along at a frenetic, juggernaut pace, these tracks hone the Reprazent of *New Forms* into a deeper, louder and more direct unit.

"ME AND ZACK DE LA ROCHA SAT DOWN AND SPOKE ABOUT A LOT OF THINGS, AND IT'S VERY RARE THAT YOU MEET SOMEONE AND YOU IMMEDIATELY KNOW YOU CAN GO TO THE STUDIO AND WORK THIS."

"We've spent the last two years just getting everything tight," Size explains. "I'll tell you now—you can play this album against any hip-hop album, against any R&B album, and the kicks and the snares are just as tight."

The instruments and vocals interact naturally rather than coming off as disparate fragments forced to coexist. Guest appearances from Rage Against The Machine's Zack de la Rocha, Wu Tang's Method Man and the Roots's Rahzel won't hurt its chances in the US, either. There's just one problem: As we talk, there are barely two months before the album's scheduled to be in stores, and Island Def Jam has already sent some tracks to the press—but Size hasn't finished or named the record yet.

"If I've got the opportunity to be able to just do one more thing that'll make it fit together better, then I will," he begins with a wry smile. "I'm gonna go to [my record label] in London on Monday with seven new tracks, seven new pieces to fit into the puzzle to make it right. I'm still young in making albums, I'm still learning, but this time around I've learned so much. And I know about trying to actually get into a piece of music, so deep into it that you're ignorant to everything around you. I'm in that mode at the moment."

Even the seven new tracks he'll be presenting to his label tomorrow won't mean the album is done, though. "I don't think you ever decide something's finished," says the DJ/producer, who claims not to be a perfectionist. "I think you become content with something, and think it's finished. My studio's right next to my bedroom and my stuff is never switched off. I've got a setup where I can get something in my head and I can access those ideas immediately."

Life is like this for Size, a continual refining of the new album with intermittent breaks for live dates across the planet. This has been the case since 1997, when *New Forms* catapulted Size to prominence along with Reprazent (a band of eight featuring DJs, Krust, Die and Suv, rapper MC Dynamite, singer Onallee, live drummer Rob Merrill and touring bassist Si John).

The record became the first expression of drum 'n' bass to find its way into many British homes following a surprise 1997 capture of the coveted Mercury Music Prize. The gobsmacked Size staggered onto the podium in a ceremony shown live on national TV, unable to grasp what had happened, and promptly donated the £25,000 prize to The Basement, a youth center where he'd first learned to program a drum machine. While many looked to Goldie, the more obvious star, to take drum 'n' bass overground, it was the slight, disarmingly humble Size and his compatriots who finally brought this new music to a mass audience.

Size was born and raised in Bristol, the son of two of the thousands of Jamaican immigrants who'd moved to the UK in the '60s, lured by the promise of a chance of a new life only to be confronted with shit jobs, hostility, intolerance and ignorance. Bristol, a port on the Severn estuary that cleaves England from Wales, was an important center for the slave trade in centuries past and eventually became home to one of Britain's largest black communities. Size's parents and older brothers often played ska, funk, jazz and rocksteady records. Unlike American radio, where the segregation of formats underpins radically different cultural experiences for people from different racial backgrounds, Size remembers radio's magpie attitude giving him a broad range of influences.

"But one of the key things was that they never played any black music on English radio, so I was hearing a lot of pop and rock. My mum used to have the radio on all day, so naturally that would be in you. That's a black British thing—being in a household and switching on the radio, and it wouldn't necessarily be what you wanted to hear, but you'd accept it. But at the same time you run through the dial and pick up stations playing Michael Jackson records. And it made you learn to want to sift out what you liked, what you were looking for."

Down the road at the Glastonbury Festival, Size continued his musical education, particularly enjoying the punk tent. "They'd be the worst bands ever, but they were wicked! Twelve-second songs, like, 'This one's called 'I'm Gonna Shout At My Mother For No Reason At All,' one-two-three-four!'"

There'd been a hip-hop scene in Bristol for a while, but it arrived across the country as a whole in 1987 with Def Jam Recordings, Public Enemy and the Beastie Boys. That spark lit the fire under Bristol artists as stylistically diverse as Massive Attack, Portishead, Goldie and Smith and Mighty Nelly. Hooper was also in that bunch—he later moved to London to work with Soul II Soul in the mid-'80s before going on to produce records for Björk, Massive Attack and Madonna. "Hip-hop was the only guideline we had," Size considers. "We never got a guideline from rock music, techno or house."

Size was expelled from school at age 16 for throwing a chair at a teacher, and gradually drifted in and out of trouble with the police before landing a position as a youth worker. He was trying his hand at reggae production, taking in the city's sound systems at St. Paul's district carnival, where DJs would switch from punk to reggae and jazz-funk to hip-hop at will, when the final piece of his own personal musical jigsaw fell into place. The warehouse party and open-air rave scene of the late 1980s inaugurated the notion of the sped-up breakbeat, and Size had found music with an energy he could feel. Crucially, he understood how and why all the parts fit together. He formed Full Circle with friends Krust, Die and Suv as a tight-knit clique and began releasing records in 1991, eventually launching Full Circle as an independent imprint before signing to respected jazz DJ Gilles Peterson's eclectic Talkin' Loud label in '95, and dubbing his group Reprazent. The debut album cogently summarized the Size and Full Circle story so far, collated from their years of musical experimentation bristling with energy and ideas.

New Forms was the first record to marry the ever-evolving drum 'n' bass sound to jazz, funk and soul grooves while still remaining grounded in song structure. The hybrid translated a new and often baffling music into a more understandable—and therefore digestible





and marketable—form, without any obvious signs of compromise. But its principal creator considers the achievement modestly.

"*New Forms* was just a record that we put together, bits from here, bits from there, that was totally for the DJs, not for people who wanted to hear something different," Size explains, his brow furrowing slightly as he waves away a wasp hovering near the "Size" tattoo on his right shoulder. "There's tracks on there from '93, '94, and it came out in '97, and over time the music got harder and harder."

During the years the group spent making the tracks that comprised *New Forms*, Size's father died, an event that altered his view on life and his work. Staring into some deep inner space, he considers, "You realize that one day you really are going to not be here. So whatever happens in between, you got to make the most of it. At the same time I think, to be honest with you, I feel him looking down and giving me guidance. That's a strength, Belief is strength, and I've got a lot of belief in myself."

Self-belief has clearly not been in short supply during the making of the new album, and the instrumental, production and stylistic contrasts this time around are immense. Recorded over a concentrated period, and the product of the live band (formed only after *New Forms*' release) jamming to "a skeleton" of a track, as Size puts it, the new record eschews samples and "tricks" that Size says dates *New Forms*, such as time-stretched breakbeats and chopped-up vocals.

Looking back, Size reckons *New Forms* "was just an outline about what there is to come. A very early outline, but a great outline. And then we had to put it on stage, and that was hard. So hard it took us until our last show to really work out how to do it live with no strings attached. So now, we made the album, and the show sounds exactly the same as the record. We're not trying to make sounds to fit, we're using actual sounds that we use on the record."

Also largely abandoned is the predominantly instrumental nature of the previous album, as Dynamite and Onalee take much more prominent roles.

"What I'm trying to do here is to make a vocal album," Size admits. "The reason why we did instrumentals before was because when you played live you'd go out and DJ and you'd have a live MC, and there wasn't much space left for the vocals. But now, I really want to work with vocals. I feel that there's so much to do. I want to work with singers, rappers, rock artists, and I've got one of each on the new record. So even having the guests aboard, I've made sure that I've highlighted my people and what they've always been about." Size began working with vocals and live instrumentation on last year's side-project, Breakbeat Era, along with DJ Die and vocalist Lennie Laws.

No longer solely a product of Bristol's mix-and-match musical approach, Reprazent has toured the globe and Size consequently has a much broader outlook. "I've got feedback from a lot of people who have supported what we're about doing," he divulges. "And if that doesn't affect me, if I can't bring something back from those experiences and put it in my music, I might as well just stay in Bristol and make exactly the same record as I did before."

There's more overt personality this time around. On "Center Of The Storm," Rage's de la Rocha responds to the killing of Amadou Diallo by New York police with the lyrics, "To the Mayor/May I say I endorse/The full-scale murder of your force/ Of course." Is there concern that the diatribe might hurt Reprazent's chances of breaking America? Size bristles, maintaining that American success would be "a bonus." (While *New Forms* sold half a million copies worldwide, only 115,000 of those were in America, according to SoundScan.) It isn't something he's particularly concerned with, and besides, the Diallo killing is worth shouting about.

"That's a world-wide issue: A guy got shot 41 times. And to me, that lyric's really not that extreme. He's saying to the Mayor, 'May I, please may I...'. Besides which, I think there's a lot more to that record than even the lyrics. Me and Zack sat down and spoke about a lot of things, and it's very rare that you meet someone and you immediately get a vibe where you know you can go to the studio and know that you can work this."

"When we recorded that, he didn't go into the vocal booth to record it. We got the mic and plugged it into the control room. All of us were in the room together and he did it like he was on stage. And that was the

take. The energy was incredible."

Roni Size is an enthusiast whose most used word today is the affirmation, "Totally!" But for an album he considers to be "basically a high-energy funk record," the new music he makes comes entirely from the head, not the hips.

"I can't play one instrument fluently. You know?" he explains, eager to be understood. "But that doesn't stop me trying to create what I do. It's important that it comes from the head. I'm not the kind of guy that goes into a room, gets a lot of stuff together, hits the buttons and says, 'Yeah, that's it.' It's got to be from my head. I've got to think it

"I KNOW ABOUT TRYING TO ACTUALLY GET INTO A PIECE OF MUSIC, SO DEEP INTO IT THAT YOU'RE IGNORANT TO EVERYTHING AROUND YOU. I'M IN THAT MOOD AT THE MOMENT."

through, think it through, think it through, then once I've got the basic idea, then I can create it."

He reads and takes notice of his press, a refreshingly honest and uncommon admission from a musician. "It's good when you go out and the DJ plays it and everyone dances—it's good that they enjoy it in that instant. But once someone starts writing about it, it's going to influence the way you go about being in the studio. There's no way, if someone says that your album is shit, no matter how strong you are, no matter what sort of person you are, that it's not going to affect you."

One might expect a record fashioned in this way to be clinical rather than organic and rounded. Size smiles gently. "So many different people have got so many different ideas about what we're doing that I couldn't...that's you, that's one that you've got to work out." He seems happy to get another response.

"I'm all about the drop," Size advises earnestly at one point, referring to the moments in his music where periods of minimal build-up end with instruments and textures crashing back into place. "It's all about the car," he urges later, explaining how he tests his music out not on a dancefloor or on some expensive studio sub-bass monitors, but on the "shit system" in his car. "I'm all about the trailer," he reveals as well, comparing the rush he wishes his music to inspire in listeners to the buzz he gets from seeing 90-second condensations of the best bits of movies like *The Matrix*, *Blade* or *Mission: Impossible 2*. There are many things Roni Size is all about. Before I leave he lets me know about another one.

"I wanna get the loft done," he vows, looking to the top of his three-story house. "It's all about the loft."

I ask if that's where his studio is.

"No, I haven't got a loft yet," he smiles, gesturing across his yard at the view from the hilltop over the neighbouring districts of bohemian Montpellier and the predominantly black St. Paul's. "I wanna get one put in. I'll have the whole view then. That's my city."

He's looking forward to what he terms "a Prodigy holiday," so called after his peers who "smashed it so big they just took three years off." But once the new record finally gets out, his problems may just be beginning, with everyone lining the hills of St. Andrews to work with Reprazent.

"We'll work it out, man," he grins. "I'll get my holiday. But if I'm not happy with myself, how am I supposed to make you happy? So let's get me happy first, and if those other things happen, cool."

He takes another satisfied look down over Bristol's red-tiled rooftops, picks up his mobile phone from the garden table top and heads back in, on his way back upstairs to the studio. He looks pretty happy, I suggest, all things considered.

"Yeah, I'm happy," he grins. "This album's for me."

NMM

Fear and



Searching for the real rave deep in the heart of Mexico.

STORY AND PHOTOS: B. WERDE ADDITIONAL PHOTOS: DORI MONDON



OL' WERDE BASTARO LOVES HIS JOB.

I've just boarded a plane to Mexico. When I land in Cancún, I will take a car to La Posada Del Capitán Lafitte, a remote resort on an isolated stretch of beach some 45 kilometers south of Cancún. There, the San Francisco house duo Dubtribe Sound System (Sunshine and Moonbeam Jones) is setting up camp and hosting 175 or so of their

most devoted fans. The \$300 I sent them covers the cost of a bed in one of the four-to-a-room cottages, plus breakfast and dinner in the communal dining hall. Ostensibly, I'm reporting on the weeklong music gathering, but I'm really hunting rave.

When I accidentally stumbled into a rave chatroom in the mid-'90s, I was entrenched in the University of Delaware's frat culture. A "party" was where people went to get laid, and dancing was either the "one-beer shuffle" or something bordering on public dry-humping. My chat friends took me to a New York club for a rave night; one pill and seven hours later, I stepped out into the bright light of a new day.

Then, parties were advertised on postcard-sized flyers and, depending on the venue and the DJ lineup, usually cost fractions what tickets cost today. I didn't know much about DJs—I went to parties to see rave friends, some of whom traveled hundreds of miles to take ecstasy and let their limbs fly about in joyful abandon. We lived for moments when it all clicked, like the time at Acid Fever in Baltimore, when acid-house act the Stickmen had the whole front room of the cozy club dancing until five or so in the morning. When the lights came on, and no one stopped, they kept right on playing, and we kept dancing in the brightly lit room, smiling like fools and hugging each other when it was over. Or one fall night at a party called Feminine Melody, where my friends and I danced all night on grass and mud under a tent, before stepping out to watch the sun rise over the Chesapeake. We connected—with each other, the DJs and our environments—in a confluence of good friends, good parties and good drugs.

Loving in Cancún



I haven't had a moment like that in years, though. My post-college move to New York coincided with the rise of stale-aired jaded superclubs that continue to reign like garish, transgendered divas. I'm embarrassed to say their expensive lasers, top-of-the-line sound systems and in-place permits have lulled me into acceptance. Who has time anymore to drive up and down the East Coast, chasing parties that might get shut down anyway? The media was just figuring out that rave was a marketable commodity ("It's 3 a.m.... Do you know where your children are?" asked the teaser for *20/20*, sometime around '96, when I knew it was the beginning of the end). Abstractions of the scene were beginning to crack the mainstream, as the Chemical Brothers and Prodigy cracked the sales charts and Madison Ave.

On my way to the gate at LaGuardia, I notice ecstasy on the cover of *Time* magazine, and Napster adorning *Newsweek*. The rave scene's drugs, music and embrace of technology have made it to the mainstream, but the intangibles of community and purpose seem to have been left behind. The club nights and parties I generally avoid now seem driven by celebrity worship—clusters of starfuckers craning their necks for a glimpse at Sasha or Fatboy Slim—or a desire to look fabulous in the right place at the right time. Now, as dance music and ecstasy are exploding in America, I am more curious than ever: Where did rave go?

Cancún seems as good a place to search as any. Dubtribe "advertised" this "party" only on their Web site, which means that most of the people who come are extended members of the Dubtribe

family, or, like me, heard about it from someone who is. Most of us know about the first such party Dubtribe organized: a weeklong camping trip in an isolated part of Maui, where the group took in the first dawn of the millennium.

Maui, said Robb and Chelle, a couple from New York who made both trips, was an "amazing experience." The Maui group roughed it; their campsite had nothing but Earth's natural beauty, which meant, among other more pleasant aspects, no drinking water, no showers and overflowing outhouses. But it also meant an indefatigable sense of community. That week began with the group stitching together a patchwork tarp to use as a tent for the dancing area, each person contributing a sheet or blanket to the project. Each member of the crew took turns cooking and cleaning for the group.

Robb's a DJ from around New York City whose blistering house sets are gaining in reputation. I once saw the stocky ex-Florida State football player run a 4.3 40 down Seventh Street to slam his trunk door down on an unfortunate thief who picked the wrong car to ransack.

"I just wanted to do something different than the things I was always doing," Robb said about his previous adventure with Dubtribe. "When I first told my friends about Maui, everybody was saying, 'You'll come back and be this dirty hippie. You'll be hanging out with a bunch of non-showering, patchouli-wearing techno deadheads.'"

I had similar concerns about spending a week with some sort of peace mafia. Dubtribe's house tracks are often positive affirmations set to a beat. Sunshine's chants and Moonbeam's throaty alto tell



stories of despair, redemption and, more often than not, love. ("You can do anything you want, anything you feel/ Love is all around you but you don't believe it's real," urges the chorus of their latest single, "Do It Now.") The scant information provided when I registered mentioned daily meditations and yoga, and included a brown bead on hemp twine, our "pass" onto the stretch of beach and into the dining hall. "The twine symbolizes the earth and our spirit. The bead symbolizes peace and inner vision," read the accompanying letter. I was apprehensive enough that when I saw others wearing the bead on the plane, I chose to remain anonymous, my "peace and inner vision" tucked into my shirt.

When we finally arrive at our private village, the sheer beauty of the place

erases some of my nerves—at least the scenery is breathtaking. The cabins flank a central area where the dining hall, swimming pool, bar (20 pesos for Corona, about US\$2) and small office are situated. Behind that lies the beach and then turquoise waters.

Sunshine holds a first-day orientation to let people know the basics about our cabins and dining and to lay down a few rules. His tousled brown hair and wire-framed glasses lend him a John Lennon quality. "Drugs," he says, pausing for affect, "do as many as you can." Everyone laughs. He goes on to warn about buying from locals, as the *federales* are notorious for setting up foreigners. (I'll be damned if I can even find some weed to smoke while we're down there.)

Sunshine's other orientation rules have to do with nudity—"Do it!"—and photographs ("If I'm walking around naked, I don't want to worry about someone taking a picture of my penis," he deadpans). Throughout the week, plenty of people erase their tan lines.

After the orientation, Sunshine and Moonbeam dissolve into the group. We soak in the sun on the white sand beaches and the house music that flows from large speakers each day as the sun sets over the Caribbean. We visit Mayan ruins in Chichin Itza and Tulum. We eat local meals (eggs and nachos?) together in the dining hall, and afterward sit by a blazing fire, embers dancing off into the ocean

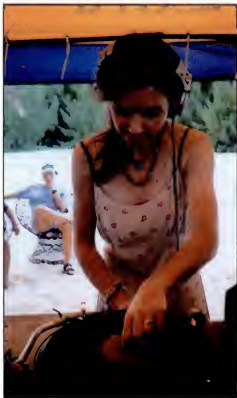
breeze. If it sounds like summer camp for ravers, it was.

The first time I see Stephen, one of my roommates, he's coming from yoga class sporting a sarong skirt and nail polish. (Surprisingly, he pulled off the ensemble without looking effeminate.) Great, I think, one of those touchy-feely techno-hippies. He turns out to be a biochemist from San Francisco. His team recently developed an antibody for a protein found in women with a particularly lethal form of breast cancer. That night, we converse into the morning about the ethics of curing cancer—tampering with what he thinks might just be natural selection. I smell no patchouli.

Stephen and I marvel over Jonathan, a short, quiet, stocky guy with a shaved head, lots of tattoos and a thick bullring in his nose. Jonathan would look scary even in the most non-judgmental world. But one night at the fire, he cuts loose, explaining that he came on the trip primarily to see the Mayan ruins. A group of about 40 people hangs on his every word as he discusses the eerie and unexplained phenomena that existed in various early civilizations. Jonathan, it turns out, grew up an intolerant soul in North Carolina, and consciously altered his appearance to never forget what it's like to be different.

In New York, I would have likely dismissed these people—now suddenly they're teaching or enlightening me, making me laugh. Sheila works the graveyard at a BP gas station in Akron, Ohio, and she hands out dozens of glowsticks one night on the beach. If I were at a club in NY and someone even attempted to hand me a glowstick, I would scowl or give a pitying "you're a well-intentioned loony" look. But dancing with a glowstick is fun, and the main reason I don't do it is because I am afraid people will look at me and think "you're a well-intentioned loony." That night on a Mexican beach, I dance with a glowstick. Two, in fact: one red, one blue. We light up the beach like psychedelic fireflies.

The night of the final party, Sunshine and Moonbeam perform a live set, positioning their sequencer and mixing board under a tent on the beach. Some watch, as if it's a concert, while others dance in the cool sand. Someone offers Gummi-Savers



dosed with liquid acid. Those who snuck pills through customs make use of them. One girl comes around preaching the merits of GHB, doling out capsules of the bitter liquid to willing recipients. Even her ignorance of the lethal chemical is shrouded in a desire to share. As the sun rises, we, tripped-out or otherwise, lie on the sand in dancel-out bliss, exhausted but marveling at the beauty of the moment. A retired English teacher from San Francisco who'd been part of the beat, hippie, disco, new-wave and rave scenes grabs the hand of a nearby girl from Vancouver—young, blonde, beautiful, and just as naked as he. The two of them run for the sea, hand in hand, splashing and laughing as they drop into the warm waves. It's taken me years, but I finally have another "moment" to add to my mental scrapbook.

Later, when we'd returned to New York, Robb told me: "Going to Maui or Mexico and then coming back here and jumping into the lifestyle we live everyday in the city, it was like someone threw cold water in my face. But you have to get away from the atmosphere to realize it: People have tunnel vision, no eye contact, fewer smiles. People are more aggressive. I noticed it in me. We don't like to think we're like that. But you have to be when you're in it."

As much as the idealized rave scene has unique music and fashion, from within it is just as often defined by what it isn't. No judgment. No testosterone. No fratboys obsessed with beer and sex. Just people who want to dance and feel good, and maybe make other people feel good, too. That is the seed from which Mexico2000 grew. And while some would say the flower that birthed the seed—the American rave scene—is lost beneath a wave of media exploitation and enormous full-color flyers to \$50 parties and drug use and casual newcomers to the scene that don't get it, it's good to know that if people care about creating a special experience, and not just making money, it can still happen. It remains to be seen if it will ever happen again for those who can't afford airfare to Cancún—or Dubtribe's next party, possibly in the desert near Hot Springs.

In New York, I would have likely dismissed these people and now suddenly they're teaching or enlightening me, making me laugh.

Several weeks later at a DJ gig in New York, Sunshine tells me he needs these trips to reconnect for the same reason he makes music, to do something positive. "You take a kid, maybe from Kansas, who's never left the state. We show them the beach, the ocean, maybe teach them some yoga, some meditation. It's amazing how people open up.



They just peel like an onion. So many parties today, there's no teaching, no unity. It wears me down."

There is another moment from Mexico ingrained in my mind: sitting on wet chaise lounges at three in the morning listening to Sunshine and Moonbeam explain why they are leery of a story being written about what we've shared. Sunshine pulls at his cigarette and recalls how he used to take part in the desert rave parties outside of San Francisco until a magazine wrote about them: suddenly attendance went from a few hundred people to a few thousand and the spirit was gone. Moonbeam is more emotional: "Why do you want to write about it?" she presses, knees drawn to her chest. "We just worked so hard for this.... I just want to keep it mine—ours—for as long as I can."

Musicians shunning press? It is a testament to how much the week means to them; they have seen what media and hype have done to the rave scene, and they fear it. Sunshine is clear that if I am to get a blessing, it will need to be from both of them, but seems to be pushing for the story. "Someone is going to write about this eventually," he says. "Who's to say that next time some journalist won't just come along and write a story without talking to us?"

Moonbeam finally relents. But I'm still a bit concerned about a question of hers that's lingering in my head: "What happens when suddenly everyone knows about it? What then?"

MM

Next Month: The Love Parade—1.3 million people dancing to trance in a Berlin street, or, "What happens when suddenly everyone knows about 'it'?"





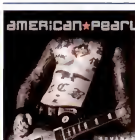
2 SKINNEE J'S

Volumizer

Capricorn

2 Skinnee J's puts on a show in the grand P-Funk tradition, where it's up to the audience to have as much fun as the band. Take five guys, dress 'em up like Flash Gordon, hand 'em some instruments, and let 'em loose on the crowd. But all great live bands face the same dilemma in the studio: how to lay the party down digitally. And, sure enough, a bit of that Skinnee spontaneity is lost on Volumizer. Of course, without recordings like the band's major label debut, *Supermercado*, and this, the follow-up, who'd understand a damn word those kids are rapping? And lyrics

are half the game here. Check "Horns Of Destruction": "Cause you're an original/ Like *Psycho*/ Starring Vince Vaughn." Volumizer represents a fun-lovin' band trying like hell to be taken seriously without losing the laughs. The humor's there, it's just subtle—expressed through Beastie-like wordplay and songs like "Secret Frequency," an '80s homage that could have been played on the radio between "Pop Muzik" and "Whip It." Volumizer continues the band's unique hip-hop/rock exploration with more 311 and Cypress Hill in it than anything by Limp Bizkit or Kid Rock. And, despite a growing culture of rap-metal misogyny and violence, 2 Skinnee J's favors a more positive outlook that's refreshing and, quite frankly, a relief. *—Robin A. Rothman*



AMERICAN PEARL

American Pearl

Wind-Up

Somewhere in this great land of ours, where guys still ride Harleys because they're made in America, the radio still blasts forth the dinosaur-rock guitar-hero staples of the '70s, from Mountain to Molly Hatchet. In this Never-Neverland, east of Detroit Rock City and straight on 'til morning, the wild Lost Boys haven't discovered a new rock band they've liked since, oh, Guns N' Roses. They'll have none of this newfangled speed-metal/hip-hop-inflected stuff, like Korn and Limp Bizkit, that misfit kids in the rest of America listen to—here it's strictly meat, potatoes and whiskey. This is where

American Pearl lives. A Los Angeles foursome fronted by guitarist Kevin Quinn, who quit his day job as tattoo-artist-to-the-stars to play rawkandroll!!!!, American Pearl are true rebels. They'd have to be to dig up this fossilized style and present it without a trace of condescension, irony or mean-spirited misanthropy at a time when even Axl's been flirting with techno-metal hybrids. Hell, they even unearthed ex-Pistol Steve Jones to co-produce their debut. But, hey, if Jimmy Page and the Black Crowes can stage a successful comeback by rediscovering the *Zep* back catalog, why can't these guys do it with their own roaring originals? Hello, Cleveland! *—Gary Susman*



AT THE DRIVE-IN

Relationship Of Command Grand Royal

OUT:

September 12

FILE UNDER:

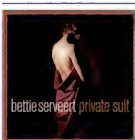
Emo-tinged prog-punk

R.I.Y.L.:

Disembodiment Plan, Sleater-Kinney, Relused

Although At The Drive-in made its name on the emo circuit, its music always sounded too primal to lump it in with that of its more pop-minded tourmates, like the Get Up Kids or the Promise Ring. The El Paso-bred, L.A.-based group continues to branch out on its second full-length disc, with a new label (the Beasties' Grand Royal) and producer (Ross Robinson, of Korn, Limp Bizkit and Slipknot fame) that will never be labeled emo. Its sound remains largely the same, a taut amalgam of singer Cedric Bixler's screaming punk outbursts and the band's fragmented indie-guitar dissonance.

When Bixler dispenses with the screaming and the guitars start playing pretty melodies during the chorus of the epic "Invalid Litter Dept.," the emo tag starts to make sense. But most of the other elements of the band's sound, like its nonsensical lyrics and disquieting between-song segues, come from more obtuse corners of indie rock. Those lyrics could use some work—throwaway non sequiturs like "Have chicken with Jell-O" (from the chorus of "Quarantined") are tedious. But Bixler's crazed delivery is enough to save him from his own attempts at cleverness, especially when he teams up with kindred spirit Iggy Pop for the scathing duet "Rolodex Propaganda." *—Sean Richardson*



BETTIE SERVEERT

Private Suit

Parasol

OUT:

September 5

FILE UNDER:

Not-so indie rock

R.I.Y.L.:

Juliana Hatfield, Throwing Muses, Boly

Many would argue that the Dutch quartet Bettie Serveert hasn't been the same since their 1992 Matador debut, *Palomine*—and they'd be right. That album combined Carol van Dijk's slightly-trained, butterscotch-sweet vocals with Peter Visser's astringent Neil Young guitar leads and an off-center folkie approach to song structure that was both elusive and affecting. On the *Palomine* lead-off "Leg," for instance, we waited in the rain near a bus station for a full two and a half minutes before anything like a hook showed up, but the soft-loft dynamic shift and the resulting rave-up was weepy-cathartic in the best sense. Three albums later, the band shows itself to be more accomplished in all the wrong ways: The hooks always arrive right on time, and instead of the discursive, oddly-rhymed narratives and vague love letters that van Dijk seemed to discover right before our ears on the first album, we get bland catch-phrases like "It's good to be unsound" and deadwood lyrics like "on and on and on" that go just like that. Even her singing has improved. Occasionally the band finds its old self in a brooding triple-meter meditation like *Private Suit*'s title track. But otherwise they seem to have used up all their ignorance, and there's nothing left for them but proficiency. *—Jon Garelick*

BLACK HEART PROCESSION

Three

Touch And Go

American bands have been slow to pick up on the melancholic obsessions of Nick Cave, let alone match them to the clomping cabaret rhythms of German composer Kurt Weill. But San Diego's the Black Heart Procession is one band that's crafted its hearty sound from these dark orchestral sources. Part goth, part alt-country, the slow, woe-infected music on *Three* shifts and sways beneath singer Paul Jenkins's 10-song fixation on a lost and bitterly missed love. Jenkins and songwriting partner Tobias Nathaniel weave bleak, narcotic visions into their songs. The duo (who initially teamed up in

the dirge-y *Three Mile Pilot*) are joined by drummer/trumpeter Jason Crane, but the two are the band's primary songwriters. Nathaniel's gently coursing piano and organ flow beneath the delicate strains of Jenkins's guitar melodies and dissolute vocals. Their graveyard blues is further enhanced by bowed saw, pump organ and mysterious reverber effects. The lyrics describe a heartbreak so closely felt that all parts of Jenkins's vision fall beneath its influence. The unrelieved despair of *Three* may at first seem too depressing to enjoy. But like a tug towing an ocean liner, the Black Heart Procession's dark music pulls the wounded freight of songs like "Guess I'll Forget You" and "A Heart Like Mine" with both sensitivity and guile. »Lois Maffeo

PAUL BURCH & THE WPA BALLCLUB

Blue Notes

Merge

Earlier this year, country-folk iconoclasts Lambchop tapped the Nixon-era '70s for thematic inspiration. Now, with his Nashville-based WPA Ballclub, Lambchop drummer Paul Burch picks up a guitar and reaches back further still, fashioning timeless tales of love and woe from the faded fabric of old-time country & western music. On *Blue Notes*, his third outing with the band he formed with Lambchop steel guitarist Paul Niehaus in 1994, Burch writes and sings in the plain-spoken yet evocative vernacular of a forgotten America and does so without artifice or condescension. Like

neo-hillbilly traditionalists Freakwater or a less archly gothic Handsome Family, Burch's knack for spinning a good yarn hooks closely to the spirit of the dusty age his storytelling's meant to evoke. "Willpower," about a jilted lover so overwhelmed by his vices that he feels compelled to "lay down on the railroad track," gets things off to an auspicious start. "Isolda," a bittersweet lament about a loveless countess and the would-be suitor who desires her from afar, waxes and wanes with Niehaus's mournful pedal steel and a burnished Nashville Skyline quiver. A jaunty banjo- and fiddle-driven Flatt & Scruggs number, "Head Over Heels," caps the whole thing on an upbeat note. The cumulative effect feels something like going to a drunken barn dance where some people cried, some people died, and then everybody danced to forget the other two things. »Jonathan Perry



OUT:

August 8

FILE UNDER:

Fourth-generation rap-rock

R.I.Y.L.:

Body Count, Pimpadelic, Biohazard

they inspired. Chuck's voice, one of the greatest rock 'n' roll instruments of all time, has grown a little hoarse with time, but it can still hit like a grenade. Most of the show belongs to Jason and Griff, though, and they simply aren't up to it. They have little to say, and they're not that interesting when they say it (and worse than uninteresting when Jason sings it in his check-how-deep-and-soulful-I-am wail). The riffs are loud but draggy and unmemorable, the beats are leaden, and worst of all, the Campers seem unconvinced. They're pugnacious-sounding for sure, but the only time when their rage really comes out is on "U R Us," a frothing rant against the concept of the V.I.P. section. C.C.'s not really confronting anybody the way P.E. did in its prime—they're just preaching to the choir. »Douglas Wolk

CONFRONTATION CAMP

Objects In The Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear

Artemis

Rap-rock still appears to be where the hearts and minds of young Americans are, so Public Enemy's Chuck D and Professor Griff have joined forces with singer/rapper Kyle Ice Jason and a thoroughly generic rock-band-with-turntablist as Confrontation Camp (did they really have to pick a name with Holocaust resonance?). The problem isn't that they're out of their element—Chuck was rhyming over hard-rock grooves with P.E. a dozen years ago—it's that *Objects In The Mirror* finds them desperately dogpaddling to catch up with the bands

GRAHAM COXON

The Golden D

Transcopic-Caroline

If the superluzzed guitars and buried vocals throughout *The Golden D* didn't make Graham Coxon's fondness for American post-punk clear enough, the moonlighting Blur guitarist favors us with not one but two renditions of anthems by seminal '80s band Mission Of Burma. On "Fame And Fortune" and "That's When I Reach For My Revolver" Coxon (playing all instruments) nails the vocal attack and Peter Prescott's inimitable (until now) drum fills with creepy accuracy. But both songs have been covered before (even Moby couldn't ruin the latter), and with the originals still in print, there's little point to



OUT:

August 15

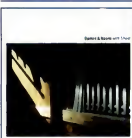
FILE UNDER:

Americana rock redux

R.I.Y.L.:

Sonic Youth, Polvo, early Mudhoney

this exercise beyond showing that it can be done. Elsewhere, Coxon's (not especially) originals dial up period styles from Doyndream Nation-era Sonic Youth ("Lake") to metallic hardcore (skateboarder tribute "Jamie Thomas"). In fairness, there are some change-ups: "Keep Hope Alive" is an acoustic ballad with tape effects, and the funky horn line of "Oochy Woohy," though underdeveloped, is refreshing in this context. Again, it's impressive that one musician in London can sound so much like four in Boston, New York, or Seattle, but by the Melvins-manque sludgefest of "Don't Think About Always," you may be left wondering why Coxon doesn't just join a band. »Franklin Bruno



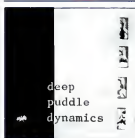
OUT:
September 5
FILE UNDER:
Psych-folk supergroup
R.I.Y.L.:
Pearls before Swine, Quicksilver
Messenger Service, Nick Drake

DAMON AND NAOMI

Damon And Naomi With Ghost
Sub Pop

In this corner, wearing matching turtle-necks and carrying a copy of André Breton's *Mad Love*: Damon Krukowski and Naomi Yang, the somnambulant duo once known as Galaxie 500's rhythm section. And in the opposite corner, wearing "Free Tibet" tees and spinning prayer wheels: Masaki Batoh, Michio Kurihara and Kazuo Ogin of mystical/musical Japanese collective Ghost. Here, the wrestling trope breaks down, as this collaboration is more group hug than challenge match. Its cough-syrup tempos and fogbound vocals derive from Damon And Naomi's 1998

album *Playback Singers*, as the away team fleshes out the Yanks' song-skeletons with textured guitar and hazy pads of Mellotron. There are tenser moments, as when a sampled monk chant cleaves the harpsichord-based track "The New World," but overall, Ghost employs a more subdued palette here than on their own releases. Sometime guitar hero Batoh seems particularly contained, taking lengthy solos only on the fade of "The Great Wall" and the roomy, fuzz-fueled "Tanka," named for a concise Japanese poetic form. Choice covers of Alex Chilton's "Blue Moon" and Tim Hardin's "Eulogy To Lenny Bruce" (modeled on Nico's version) round out a song-centered summit meeting that's probably more satisfying for not being the bong-loaded freakout one might fear. —Franklin Bruno



OUT:
September 12
FILE UNDER:
Avant hip-hop
R.I.Y.L.:
Anti-Pop Consortium, Mike Ladd, Saul Williams

DEEP PUDDLE DYNAMICS

The Taste of Rain...Why Kneel?
Anticon

With slogans like "catch us before we fall off" and "hip-hop music for the advanced listener," it's not surprising that releases from the Anticon crew/label tend to deliver some weird shit. Consisting of four MCs (Sole, Dose One, Alias and Slug) sprouting from as-yet-uncharted spots in hip-hop's Rand McNally (Maine, Minneapolis and Cincinnati), Deep Puddle Dynamics redirects hip-hop's braggadocio inward for novel-gazing and self-psychoanalyzing rhymes that quote Oliver Wendell Holmes, misquote KRS-One ("in about four seconds the teacher

will begin to think"), and express plenty of post-collegiate angst. Self-doubt is enough to get anyone laughed out of a cipher, but these guys deliver it with enough oddball style, breathless energy and kinetic neck-snap to win over unbelievers. The album's first track ("Deep Puddle Theme Song") ends with a mantra: "Life is but a sinking feeling." Eleven cuts later, "Mothers Of Invention" offers this revelation: "As a child I was afraid of the storm, but now I welcome the rain." Somewhere in between—among free-association word games, modernist cut-up experiments and claustrophobic beat science—these cerebral MCs turn their emotional hang-ups (dejection, alienation, disaffection, etc.) into their calling card. —Michael Endelman

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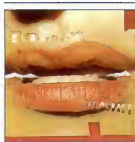
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ELASTICA

The Menace

Atlantic

OUT:
August 22
FILE UNDER:
Bitter bird on a wire
R.I.Y.L.:
Wire, the Fall, the Waitresses

Finally. After five years and myriad break-up rumors, not to mention the departure of Donna Matthews, Elastica returns with a new disc. The question is whether *The Menace* can rekindle the big fun of favorites such as "Connection" and "Line Up," but the answer will have to wait until Justine Frischmann cedes the floor. As the main force behind Elastica post-Matthews (who is on a few tracks and gets some writing credits), Frischmann uses the album as a means of expressing her hopes and her pain. It's an existential crisis set off by the dissolution of her longtime relationship with Blur's Damon

Albarn. Amid *The Menace*'s moody ruminations, none stands out as boldly as "My Sex," a spoken word call-and-response with sparse accompaniment and whispered romantic wishes for "a lover who can love me slowly." Here and elsewhere Elastica relies on electronic beats and fuzzed-out basslines, a trick that works better on uptempo riffs like "Miami Nice." But *The Menace* isn't about having a good time; it sways between bitterness, anger, and deep breaths, recalling Elastica's perkier past on the Wire ripoff "Human" and "How He Wrote Elastica Man," which features Mark E. Smith on vocals. And yet it's not heavy-handed. In fact, other than the awkward closing cover of Trio's hit "Da Da Da," it's a perfectly glorious mess. —Richard A. Martin

ELLIOTT
False Cathedrals

Revelation

When hardcore kids get too bored or skilled to remain within their generic confines, some veer toward post-everything fragmentation (Joan Of Arc), while others get all, like, *professional*. Louisville's Elliott are so far in the latter camp that their sophomore effort makes the Promise Ring's power-pop excursions sound like Billy Childish. Since they'll probably be read out of the movement by punk purists for this tight, loud and mega-accessible effort (produced by Korn/Fiona Apple engineer Tobias Miller), it's a good thing they can deliver the mainstream goods, at least some of the time. "Drive On

To Me" is a shameless pitch straight into the alt-rock strike-zone, as frontman Chris Higdon mercilessly stuffs the undeniable (but ultimately meaningless) hook/title/chorus into every space not occupied by Kevin Ratterman's eminently air-drummable fills. Obliquely structured numbers ("Calvary Song") evoke the more radio-ready forms of nu metal, while the odd turntablist touch reveals a band gaining more studio-savvy by the minute. The band's Achilles heel is its unwavering seriousness, with a wordless-vocal-and-backward-effects opener called, yes, "Voices," being the worst offender. *False Cathedrals* is adept, ambitious and likely to render Elliott's hardcore roots a non-issue; it's also, as another punk-rock band recently put it, "no rock 'n' roll fun" whatsoever. »Franklin Bruno

FAYMAN & FRIPP
A Temple In The Clouds

Projekt

Before the term "ambient" was co-opted for dance music, its meaning was literal. The genre yielded swirling clouds of beatless sound that seeped into the air—available for attentive listening, but functional as background. Usually, it was built from loops of guitar and keyboards, with slow, microtonal changes to create transitions in melody, harmony and texture, and a soloist to color improvisations. And usually, it was played by keyboardist/producer Brian Eno, who invented the style, and King Crimson guitarist Robert Fripp, who developed a means of looping six-string

emissions between two tape recorders that he dubbed Frippertronics. This transporting or transparent CD is a return to that period, minus Eno. Good for zoning-out. Or zoning-in on the shimmering waves of distortion, the rolling guitar melodies and the tinkling metal that rings like twisting wind chimes in the half-hour title track. One reason for this album's deliciously antiquated approach is that it's been nine years in the making. In '91, Fripp left film-music maker Jeffrey Fayman two hours of looped guitar for use by Fayman's band—which then broke up. Seven years later Fayman revisited the tapes, combining some of Fripp's loops and spending hours under their mesmeric effect. Then he added his own synthesizers and percussion, producing an album that lives up to the spiritual evocations of its title. »Ted Drozdowski

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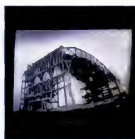
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OUT:

September 19

FILE UNDER:

Post-hardcore goes modern rock

R.I.Y.L.:

Pearl Jam, Sunny Day Real Estate, Radiohead



OUT:

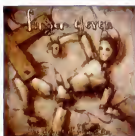
August 22

FILE UNDER:

The bush of ghosts

R.I.Y.L.:

Fripp & Eno, Harold Budd, John Hassell



FINGER ELEVEN
The Greyst Of Blue Skies Wind-Up

Looking at the gloomy voodoo-doll painting on the cover of the second disc from Canada's Finger Eleven, one could reasonably expect angst-ridden metal along the lines of Korn. The band actually sounds more like its labelmates Creed, lightening up its grunge tendencies with tuneful choruses that bring to mind another Canadian group, Our Lady Peace. The OLP comparisons don't end there: OLP producer Arnold Lanni brings his trademark tight guitar crunch to the disc, while singer Scott Anderson frequently leaps into a falsetto just like OLP's Raine Maida. On "Drag You Down," Anderson

purges his demons over a sickly clean guitar line before breaking into a full-bore wail for the chorus. He's smart enough to shift gears before the brooding gets to be too much, getting outside of his troubled head on twisted love songs like "Stay And Drown" and the darkly understated "Sick Of It All." Like Fear Factory and Orgy, Finger Eleven has a new-wave cover up its sleeve when its own songwriting starts to drag; the band strays farther from the beaten path than most with an ominous take on Depeche Mode's "Walking In My Shoes," which fits in perfectly with the blackness of the group's own material. >>>Sean Richardson

OUT:
July 25
FILE UNDER:
Canadian grunge-pop
R.I.Y.L.:
Our Lady Peace, Bush, Creed



JOHN WESLEY HARDING
The Confessions Of St. Ace Mammott

With his tricky rhymes and fully orchestrated pop, John Wesley Harding aims for Elvis Costello but comes across with something more like "Eleanor Rigby" on *The Confessions Of St. Ace*, his first new pop recording in seven years. It's his Beatles-era pop embellishments (catch the horns on "People Love To Watch You Die") that salvage the aching sentimentality of the songs on this disc, as well as some help from Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Steve Earle and Young Fresh Fellows Scott McCaughey. Singing of romance's everyday problems, Harding could also be a more chipper Elliott

Murphy, his slightly roughed-up tenor implying intimacy over the soul-flecked tunes. If only he didn't force it and stumble over his self-conscious wordplay and awkward catch-phrasings. However, the singer-songwriter—accent on *writer*—hasn't lost all the charm that made his 1988 debut a cult hit, partly because his musical sense remains smarter than his rhymes, tempering the bitterness of the Dwight Twilley-ish "Old Girlfriends." The whimsical new wave of "Bad Dream Baby" recalls the music-hall stylings of the best British pop. And the occasional touches of self-effacing humor, like the Bauhaus quotes that close "Goth Girl," reveal that perhaps St. Ace doesn't always need to take himself quite so seriously. >>>Clea Simon

OUT:
August 29
FILE UNDER:
Thoughtful ex-pat Britpop
R.I.Y.L.:
Elvis Costello, Morrissey, Elliott Murphy

Yuji Oniki
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ISOTOPE 217
Who Stole The I Walkman

Thrill Jockey
It can be difficult to listen to funky experimental electronic jazz and not wonder for at least a milli-beat, "Didn't Miles Davis do this a whole lot better in 1972?" After all, didn't Miles—in albums like *Live Evil*, *On The Corner*, and *Get Up With It*—travel from ambient deep space to exuberant discontinuous electric-guitar-and-percussion squawking? Miles ran the voodoo down in marathon sessions that were later edited to side-long album tracks. So one is tempted to dismiss the cool-as-ice drum 'n' bass-inflected jazz funk of *Isotope 217* as way late. Instead of sustained workouts, this five-year-old

OUT:
August 8
FILE UNDER:
Post-jungle jazz
R.I.Y.L.:
Miles Davis, Tortoise, Henry Kaiser and Wadada Leo Smith

Chicago collective (including former members of post-rock instrumental combo Tortoise) clip off one fragmented idea after another—snippets of snare patter, the left-right tick of CD-noise "percussion," little muted brass figures, deep funk basslines that drive for a minute or so before evaporating, all cut into what seem like arbitrarily short pieces. But bring your attention down to the band's minimalist scale and more details begin to emerge—the swinging clatter of a "live" snare drum, abbreviated guitar, keyboard, bass and cornet solos that make their statements and move on. "Meta Bass" even has a lovely recurring theme that sounds like a paraphrase of Monk's "Round Midnight." It's not for everybody, and it won't suit all moods, but *Isotope 217* is concocting their own compelling brand of electric voodoo. >>>Jon Garelick



JIMMY EAT WORLD ★
Singles Big Wheel Recreation

True to its title, *Singles* is a collection of singles from the Arizona-based emocore powerhouse Jimmy Eat World. But not the kind of singles Capitol had in mind when the label signed the band back in '96, when the notion that a challenging yet tuneful-enough outfit like Jimmy Eat World might actually connect with a significant segment of the mainstream alternative-rock audience didn't seem quite as far-fetched as it does today. No, these are the kind of singles that don't register on SoundScan—limited edition 7-inches and the like, many of which are either

OUT:
September 5
FILE UNDER:

Tuneful, progressive punk
R.I.Y.L.:
Sunny Day Real Estate, Sense Field,
Jets To Brazil

out of print or rather difficult to find at your average CD superstore. From the start, the epic "Opener," it's easy to hear why Jimmy Eat World were emo's great white hope—even when they're off on a five-minute-plus sonic excursion, this is a band that just naturally finds its way to winning hooks and melodies bolstered by a level of emotional commitment that's hard not to be taken in by. That's the story throughout *Singles*, with the exception of a little ambient synth/sequencer dabbling that never really goes anywhere. But experiments like that are what these kind of singles are for. »Matt Ashare



DAMIEN JURADO
Ghost Of David

Sub Pop

Damien Jurado, the Northwest troubadour known for his hollow-sounding voice and melancholic songs, surpasses his folk contemporaries on *Ghost Of David* by doing what many loners with guitars can't: He turns song lyrics into carefully crafted prose. The characters here are kinsmen to author Raymond Carver's cross-bearing Americans—sweating and worrying and never getting an even break. The first track, "Medication," is a bleak monologue by a man caught between two spiraling dependents: his brother, whose psyche is shattering, and his lover, the wife of a suspicious cop. "Her

OUT:
September 19
FILE UNDER:

Dark folk character sketches
R.I.Y.L.:
Mark Kozelak, Leonard Cohen, Bruce Springsteen

man's a policeman/ With a keen sense of trouble," Jurado sings, "He's known to spot danger/ And all kinds of lies." A character in the Springsteen-esque "Johnny Go Riding" answers his friend's summons to party with a quiet answer: "Some men they are lovers/ And others the fighting type/ And me, I'm in the middle of choosing who I'd like to be." Beyond his acoustic guitar, Jurado keeps the arrangements simple and direct. The sound of a distant phone ringing, a slightly out-of-tune piano and some vacant drum beats are among the few accompaniments. The lone rocker, the short, high-impact "Paxil," offers just the right jolt on this perfectly realized folk album, a collection of frank stories told with lucid musical accompaniment. »Nois Maffeo

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DAVE ALVIN

Public Domain: Songs From The Wild Land

Hightone

CHRIS WHITLEY

Perfect Day

Valley

For decades, artists have been turning to the Great American Songbook for inspiration. But just what that songbook contains is as subjective as picking a shrink. For Sarah Vaughan, it was the Gershwins, Harold Arlen and the like. For Ray Charles, it was Hank Williams and other classic country writers. And both made enduring recordings of their choices. Making an enduring recording of anything is harder today, since so many CDs are vying for attention—with nearly a century of recorded music available, the task of choosing classics on which to leave one's own mark is formidable. Chris Whitley and Dave Alvin, two respected singer/guitarists with their roots in American rock, folk and blues, have risen to that challenge. Alvin's disc is the richer, delving into pre-electric roots music with the same (only quieter) zeal that his punk-era outfit the Blasters did with post-1950 urban electric R&B.

Whitley loots the past half-century for material, but suffers from the dark predictability of his downtown bohemian approach. At times his trio—he's joined by bassist Chris Wood and drummer Billy Martin of Medeski, Martin & Wood—is potent and scary as a junkie's nightmare. But then something like his comatose

version of Howlin' Wolf's "Spoonful" comes 'round, and the music goes on the nod. In addition to blues masters, Whitley draws on Dylan, Hendrix, Lou Reed and even the Doors, turning their glass house "Crystal Ship" into a mysterious parable. Reed's title track and Jimi's "Dripping" are also beauties, largely thanks to the emotional suppleness of Whitley's voice.

Alvin reimagines his material within an acoustic context as well, but without the hubris that comes with adopting a single hip posture. So he's free to reframe the ballad "Shenandoah" as a piece of early Impressions-style soul or recast the bluegrass chestnut "Don't Let Your Deal Go Down" as stone Chicago blues. His band, the Guilty Men, also provides more free-ranging support, buoying Alvin's varied arrangements of these tunes—some of which were around before Edison invented recording—with fiddle, accordion, harmonica, mandolin and slide and steel guitars. Alvin's not as gifted a singer as Whitley, but his capable voice carries his genre-jumping takes on near-lost stories of retribution and yearning like the gritty "Murder Of The Lawson Family" as if it were a dusty prairie wind crossing the deserts of time and place—to bring them home to us. »»Tad Drozdowski

OUT:
August 15
FILE UNDER:
Cover stories
R.I.Y.L.:
The Blasters, Mermaid Avenue, the Harry Smith box



OUT:
July 25
FILE UNDER:
Cover stories II
R.I.Y.L.:
Medeski, Martin & Wood, Lou Reed, Bob Dylan



KILLING HEIDI

Reflector 3:33-Universal

Australian guitar-pop foursome Killing Heidi has already made a big noise down under with their debut album, *Reflector*, which was a multi-platinum success there. The band is fronted by sibling songwriters, 16-year-old singer Ella Hooper and her older brother Jesse on guitar. And, as you might expect from someone still in touch with the micro-world of high school, Ella sings about subjects that wouldn't have been out of place in *The Breakfast Club*. The disc opens with "Mascara," which kicks off with a cute and sassy new-wave power-pop flash before Ella's voice takes center

stage to offer critique of high school fashionistas—a club this raven-haired alterna-chick probably did not aspire to join. Rather than trying to start a catfight, she simply shrugs and sings of a bigger world, turning her condemnation into a catchy chorus: "Boring and old/ Are the things you're told/ About the outside world/ And just wearing black/ Won't take care of that...Don't be stupid, girl." Later "Superman/Supergirl" dips into No Doubt-style skate punk-lite, and the pensive "Astral Boy" adds lavish strings to Jesse's acoustic guitar arpeggios, rounding out a strong debut that's occasionally a bit too formulaic, but never lacks for a catchy melody. »»Linda Laban

OUT:
September 19
FILE UNDER:
Family values
R.I.Y.L.:
The Go-Go's, No Doubt, Catatonia



CHRIS KNOX

Beat

Thirsty Ear

Despite his well-deserved status as godfather of the New Zealand indie scene, Chris Knox's recent outings have seemed a bit like a visit from an old friend with an annoying tendency to tell the same stories over and over again. Some degree of redundancy may be inevitable, given Knox's admittedly limited guitar skills and barebones arsenal (including a thrift-store drumbox typically programmed to resemble a horse's gallop). So while it would be wrong to call *Beat* a complete departure, the disc does feature some subtle and welcome new developments from Knox.

A ragtag horn section dubbed the Salvation Army enlivens a handful of tracks, and the clean, melodic piano lines that grace tunes like "It's Love" stand in contrast to the Casio drones that Knox favored when he was half of Tall Dwarfs. Most striking, though, is the shift in Knox's lyrics. These 13 songs, penned as Knox was dealing with the death of his father, reveal a disarming poignancy that only serves to make his trademark acerbic spleen-venting that much more effective when it surfaces on standard Knox fare like "Denial Song." The result is the first complete Knox album since his first two solo outings that truly belongs on the short list of his most accessible and successful work. »»Glen Savady

OUT:
August 22
FILE UNDER:
Kiwi hours of the mourning
R.I.Y.L.:
Robyn Hitchcock, Tall Dwarfs, Jonathan Richman

CHRIS MILLS

Kiss It Goodbye

Sugar Free

If Patsy Cline had a teardrop in her voice, singer/songwriter Chris Mills has a full-on cry in his. It's as if there's a pedal steel trapped in his throaty rasp. It was mainly that voice, falling on the Jeff Tweedy/Paul Westerberg axis, that earned Mills an association with the alt.country scene in his adopted hometown of Chicago (he's originally from Missouri, near Uncle Tupelo country), along with a tour opening for the Mekons' Jon Langford when his solo debut, *Every Night Fight For Your Life*, was released in 1998. Mills's first album, though, isn't as alt.countrified as his sophomore

endeavor, *Kiss It Goodbye*, which benefits from an actual pedal steel (played by Steve Dorocke) echoing the disc's tales of love, drunkenness and despair. Mills's electrified rootsy pop is nicely fleshed out with acoustic guitar, mandolin and violin, plus a smattering of strings and horns. And he increases the punch of the ballads here by bringing on duet partners like country-soul diva Kelly Hogan. Still, Mills is best when he rocks out, as he does on "Crooked Vein," a heartfelt, twangy anthem with lyrics that bite hard but not without a touch of humor. *—Meredith Ochs*

ERIC MINGUS

Um...Er...Uh...

Some

Don't search for Charles Mingus's musical legacy on his son Eric's debut. If anything, Eric exorcises his heritage in the drowsy and moaning blues-jazz and Afro-Cuban beats on this debut in an incantatory stew of oozing double-bass lines and spiky Hendrix-style solos (courtesy of Jeff Friedman). Lines like "My grandfather blew his brains out in the house and I'm still picking up the pieces," spice the gumbo with bitter Beat poetry. Over the course of the album, Eric's guttural croon ruminates on a genetic code programmed for self-destruction and facing insurmountable expectations,

rarely breaking the acerbic burn for instrumental flash or a cathartic refrain. Such heavy and high-minded soul suggests the influence of the Watts Prophets' Afrocentric funk-poetry more than it does Eric's dad—but then again, Charles grew up in the Watts section of L.A. Musicologists won't need to search hard here for acknowledgement of the past. The title *Um...Er...Uh...* probably nods to the groundbreaking album of collective improvisation, *Mingus Ah Um*, and the lyrics of "His Blood's In Me" recall a police officer trying to "rescue" the young, light-skinned, mixed-race Eric from the hands of his father, that "nigger." Eric is grappling with his legacy here, but being the son of a jazz giant is only one part of it. *—Neil Gladstone*



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MOCK ORANGE

The Record Play

Lobster

Listening to *The Record Play*, it's easy to imagine the members of Indiana-based rock outfit Mock Orange keeping impeccably clean homes, the carpets Hoovered neatly in rows, each tile scoured to a mirror finish. The band's second record (following 1998's *Nines And Sixes*) is that kind of space: an intricate grid of compulsively accurate math-guitar counterpoint you'd feel guilty entering in your muddy street shoes. It's not a slickly produced radio-friendly record, however; it's just calculated, from the stop-start guitar and drum phrasings down to the occasional feedback squeal. Even the few

carefully placed screams, which punctuate urgent, prom-night-ingenuous vocals by vocalists Ryan Grisham and Joe Asher, are a geeky take on more out-and-out angry—or at least passionate—punk-rock howls. But like Braid before them (and a lot of this record draws from a sleekly refined version of the Braid-patented songwriting template), Mock Orange manages to rock as much within their crystalline context as bands more interested in typically irreverent rock 'n' roll grit. So what if they don't seem like the types to trash a hotel room? Whether Mock Orange is plowing through a straight-ahead math-rock number or augmenting a tender lyrical moment with muted guitar arpeggios, their record is a solid addition to the emocore songbook. *******Dylan Steiger

OUT:

August 1

FILE UNDER:

A very Braid-y sequel

R.I.Y.L.:

Braid, early Sunny Day Real Estate, Pelvo

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Sound of Gilles Peterson

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OUT:

August 15

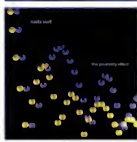
FILE UNDER:

Guitars and leather

R.I.Y.L.:

Motörhead, Speedeater, Nashville Pussy

sweaty David Lee Roth impersonation; hence the songs about evil deeds and Evel Knievel and evil women; hence the song about what a tough guy the guitarist is; and hence the stultifyingly derivative rock 'n' roll choogle that never develops into anything genuinely forceful or surprising. Lines like "Straight to hell is where I'm bound/Down below is where I'll be found" are obviously meant to be funny, but snickeringly half-ironic machismo isn't much of an improvement on the genuine item. They do have one sort of amusing song—"We Came, We Saw, We Drank," a declaration that they don't care about getting paid as long as they get free booze, whose chorus riff bears a certain resemblance to "Enter Sandman"—but they're trying to burn rubber on a broken-down lot. *******Douglas Wolke



NADA SURF★

The Proximity Effect

MarDev

OUT:

August 29

FILE UNDER:

Good old-fashioned alt-rock

R.I.Y.L.:

Weezer, the Rentals, the Who

When alternative rock's one-hitters finally get archived *Nuggets*-style, you can bet Nada Surf's summer of 1996 smash, "Popular," will achieve volume one status. An innovatively derivative concoction—think Weezer's talk/sing hit "Undone (The Sweater Song)" with an earful of Nirvana-like ironic angst during the chorus—"Popular" was a timely island of idiosyncrasy on Nada Surf's otherwise bland, Ric Ocasek-produced Elektra debut, *High/Low*. The surrounding material was sweetly tense alt-rock lite, though nothing to save the New York City-based trio from their impending buzz-bin-

to-bargain-bin fate. It comes as no surprise then, that after two years in major-label purgatory, Elektra decided to pass on Nada Surf's sophomore effort, *The Proximity Effect*, prompting the band to start its own label, MarDev, to release the disc. The album begins promisingly: "Hyperspace" and "Amateur" are gently anthemic (as is "Slow Down" from the record's unpromising portion)—Weezer crunch-pop smoothed tautly over clean, mod guitars, spacey electronics and breezy back-up vocals. The rest is just a drag-you-down mess of eye-rolling alt-rock clichés. "80 Windows" is a jangly dirge, "Mother's Day" is predatory male-themed punky cock-rock, and "Robot" is a lethargic "Popular" about date rape. It's a sophomore slump from a band that never really got over the one-hit-wonder hump. *******Lorne Behrman

YOUSOU N'DOUR

Joko

Nonesuch

Senegal's biggest musical star hasn't released an international recording in six years. He and his band produce constantly back home, but Youssou N'Dour is careful about his international profile, and aims high when making music for the world at large. This diverse meditation on the move "from village to town" delivers appropriate razzle-dazzle, a collaboration with Peter Gabriel, emotive English lyrics and lavish production values. Its two best tracks are gussied-up remakes of recent hits back home, the sweet, sensual "Birima," a song of celebration, and "Beykat," a full-throttle pop number with a

killer vocal hook and a message of praise for peasant farmers. N'Dour possesses one of the greatest voices in Africa—or anywhere—and he's no slouch as a composer and arranger either. He occasionally gets mired in the plodding esthetics of British art rock, however. "This Dream," with Gabriel, creates a trance mood with its looping sound textures, and "Yama" booms with the gravity of a rock anthem. But tracks like the percussion-driven "Mademba (The Electricity Is Out Again)" and the soulful pop ballad "Red Clay," convey N'Dour's trademark effervescence and lyricism. Two very good tracks were added, and seven—some dubious—were cut from the European release of this album. The result is a shorter, stronger set in which N'Dour's roots-pop charm survives his swim in the mainstream. **B+**—Banning Eyre

AESOP ROCK

Float

Mush

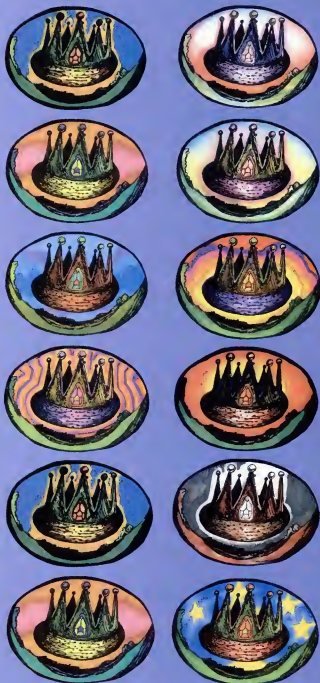
As with death-defying turntablism, untrammelled rhyming can take on the qualities of a tedious guitar solo. Saturating practically every one of Float's 70 minutes with MC mastery, Aesop Rock is definitely not immune to this charge. His particular style of brain barf, heavier and more ominous than underground sensations like MC Paul Barman, Quasimoto and Dose One (who guests on one track), gets so compressed and knotty at times that it would be impossible to absorb even if there were a lyric sheet. Bombardment is the game here, and with stark beats rarely more

than pure backdrop, there's no escape; by the end of the album, you feel as if you've just worked a customer complaint line from nine to five. But here and there, he does get off some great riffs, like his embodiment of an unhelpful, berating Bob Vila type in "How To Be A Carpenter," and his performance of both sides of a conversation about what to do with free time in "Oxygen." Both of these tracks, and much of the rest of the album, seem to suggest that Aesop is obsessed with the theme of physical depletion, which, given that he's currently balancing a hip-hop career and a day job in Manhattan, lends the overall tedium of the disc some weight. **B-**—Kevin John

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MATTHEW RYAN

East Autumn Grrin

A&M-Interscope

Recordings that actually risk emotional engagement, through either the visceral impact of the music or empathetic lyrics, may seem out of fashion in the world of contemporary rock. Guitar-based alternative rock seems to have reached a point where it's largely regarded with the same cringing nostalgia as 1970s have-a-nice-day AM-radio hits. And it's hard not to come away with the sense that pop songwriting as a vehicle for complex sentiments exists only in Aimee Mann and Michael Penn's basement. Who could be a less hip role model these days than Paul Westerberg, the grunge godfather

who secretly wanted to be Elton John? Yet on his sophomore disc, Matthew Ryan shares Westerberg's penchant for bone-deep Americana with a rough-hewn exterior—not to mention his lacerated voice—stretched over classic popcraft skeletons. Evoking not only Westerberg but also any number of heartland troubadours (Bruce Springsteen, Steve Earle, Dave Pirner), Ryan pours forth an epic of premature world-weariness and resignation, irony-free outrage at the state of the planet and a few moments of hard-won, transcendent empathy. "You are not alone," he blurts in "I Hear A Symphony," "I swear your burden is not your own," nailing, at the very least, one of the most basic things we rely on music to remind us of. —Gary Susman

OUT:

August 15

FILE UNDER:

Heartland pop

R.I.Y.L.:

Paul Westerberg, Soul Asylum, Bruce Springsteen



OUT:

June 20

FILE UNDER:

Afro-mystic experimentation

R.I.Y.L.:

X-Clan, Jungle Brothers, Micronauts

SCIENZ OF LIFE

Coming Forth By Day: The Book Of The Dead

Sub Verse

While the acceptance of "conscious" hip-hop has fluctuated over the decade, the Afrocentric mystical rap sub-sub-genre practiced by New York-via-Atlanta trio Sciencz Of Life seems to have largely fallen out of favor since the early-'90s heyday of X-Clan and Poor Righteous Teachers. But with their debut album, *Coming Forth By Day*, Sciencz Of Life bring it all back: the numerology, the invocations of Egyptian deities, the anti-Christian rhetoric, the fascination with/suspicion of Masonry, the ominous disembodied "God" voices, the ethereal sound effects and the wizard-like

lilt in the rapping. While the style has its ups (largely positive spirituality) and downs (goofy conspiracy theories, self-righteousness), a refreshing degree of sonic experimentation elevates *Coming Forth By Day*'s lo-fi alchemy. The most adventurous tracks ("Live-N-Direct," "Strange Fruit") approach a sound analogous to free jazz: irregular beats and tempos, formless raps, instrument manipulation and occasional stabs of melody, all jammed together into a challenging, transgressive mix. Placed side by side with the more traditional jazz-based hooks and tuneful upliftment ("Divine Power," "U.S.A."), the album most resembles a spacey follow-up to the Jungle Brothers' bold but ill-received art statement, *Crazy Wisdom Masters*. Seven years later, here's hoping SOL's "free rap" fares better. —Ronni Sarig

THE COMP PILE (Our guide to compilation CDs) by Nicole Keiper



TITLE: Earth: Compiled by LTJ Bukem (The Good Looking Organisation)

CONCEPT: Renowned DJ Bukem unleashes his fourth handpicked *Earth* set of electronic soul music.

TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC: All night dancin' glowstick enthusiasts.

NAMES TO DROP: Makoto, Artemis, Big Bud

SUMS IT UP: "Brazilian Sunrise" (Artemis)

VERDICT: One of Bukem's most successful mixes of grooves for the future, it flows from deep house to jazz-funk and keeps you with it from start to finish.



TITLE: Caroline Now! The Songs Of Brian Wilson And The Beach Boys (Marina)

CONCEPT: A tribute to Wilson that forges the Good Vibrations and heads for Brian's more "introspective period."

TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC: "Mike Love, not war."

NAMES TO DROP: Alex Chilton, Saint Etienne, Eric Matthews, Jad Fair

SUMS IT UP: "Caroline, No" (The Aluminum Group)

VERDICT: 'Boys-lover or not, Wilson's pop genius is undeniable—and the millennium-fied renditions of these early tracks set that fact firmly in stone.



TITLE: Deep Porn (HardCorps Entertainment)

CONCEPT: Hip-hop and dance artists drop the rhymes and beats; XXX stars add moans and poetic verse like "lick my ass right now."

TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC: "You like to mix gettin' yer groove on with gettin' yer groove on."

NAMES TO DROP: Kid Rock with Midori, DJ Larceny with Johnnie Black, DJ Muggs with Heather Hunter

SUMS IT UP: "Spanka-Vision" (George Clinton with Shayla LaVaux)

VERDICT: Beats and humpin': a winning combination.



TITLE: The Best Comp In The World (Fadeaway)

CONCEPT: Everybody who's anybody in the hardcore/post-hardcore scene lovingly rounded up.

TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC: No self-respecting scenester would be without it.

NAMES TO DROP: The Get Up Kids, Glassjaw, Errorbyte/Eleven, thisyearsmodel

SUMS IT UP: "Only With Me" (Reggie And The Full Effect)

VERDICT: One of the best comps...in the 'core world, anyway: It houses one of the best Get Up Kids tracks ever, and kicks the living shit out of the *Emo Diaries*.



TITLE: Transmission One: Tea At The Palace Of Moon (Cosmodemonic Telegraph)

CONCEPT: Double-disc set put together to support the New London, Connecticut all-ages art space/gallery Temporary Autonomous Zone (T-A-Z).

TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC: Indie rockers who're more poetic than pretentious.

NAMES TO DROP: Elf Power, Mary Lou Lord, Two Dollar Guitar

SUMS IT UP: "It's Cool We Can Still Be Friends" (Bright Eyes)

VERDICT: Artists without the fartsy; all of the artists donated their work for a worthy cause.



SHARK QUEST Man On Stilts

Merge

OUT:

August 8

FILE UNDER:

Back porch desert surf music

R.I.Y.L.:

Friends Of Dean Martinez, Emilio
Morricone, Pell Mell

their native South, the desert plains of the Southwest and the beaches of Southern California. "Sesame Hijack" encompasses all three, evoking bluegrass (with banjo picking by Sara Bell) and spaghetti-Western playfulness simultaneously, then throwing in a reverb-drenched flourish. In a further display of polystylistic mastery, these four lads and one lass, all vets of Chapel Hill's indie scene, pump out a few quirky rock tracks ("Crazy Laura," the cello-augmented "Here Sparky") and a winding acoustic/electric mélange that sounds like Pink Floyd trying to play a country song. Intriguing, and beguiling enough to serve up with chips and dip. **—Richard A. Martin**



SILKWORM Lifestyle

Touch And Go

OUT:

August 8

FILE UNDER:

Indie-rock survivors

R.I.Y.L.:

Pavement, Neil Young And Crazy
Horse, The Crust Brothers

manage to keep playing together, remaining true to their nonsense, subtly clever brand of rock, where economical beats and power chords propel expertly constructed songs. Nothing on album number seven, *Lifestyle*, strides into new territory; Midgett sings with a conversational cadence comparable to his some-time associate Steve Malkmus, and Cohen steps up front for a few gems of his own. The only un-Silkworm-like diversions here are thoughtfully placed piano vocals (on the sterling "Treat The New Guy Right"), a sprightly acoustic ditty (the album-closing "The Bones") and an ace cover of the Faces' "Ooh La La"—with the apropos chorus "I wish that I knew what I know now/ When I was younger." Older and still wise, Silkworm have nothing to regret, and another reason to celebrate. **—Richard A. Martin**

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TEDDY THOMPSON

Teddy Thompson

Virgin

Being the offspring of a famous, well-respected parent remains a blessing and a curse. It propels you through the music industry's ranks regardless of talent, but no matter how good you are there are always those initial doubts, and it can take a long time before your name truly stands on its own. Teddy Thompson, the son of Richard and Linda Thompson, may divorce himself from his parents' legacy a bit quicker than most. He allows his dad to play on a healthy selection of tunes (who could avoid that temptation?), Joe Henry produces, and the guest stars—from Emmylou Harris to studio

wunderkind Jon Brion (Aimee Mann, Nina Gordon)—make this a top-shelf studio production. But if anything, Thompson doesn't really need all this help. His voice is strong, his melodies sharp. The opening cut "Wake Up," "All I See" and "A Step Behind" are solid, well-crafted traditional singer/songwriter pop tunes that brim with romanticism and detached wit. A tightknit band, however, as opposed to seasoned studio vets, would put this record squarely in the right. There's fancy mainstream radio work here that a lean, mean band would eschew. It worked out better for Elvis Costello and Graham Parker; it can work out for Teddy Thompson, too—though he might want to keep his dad around, just in case. **+++**Rob O'Connor

OUT:

August 29

FILE UNDER:

Family Ges

R.I.Y.L.:

Aimee Mann, Richard Thompson, Edwin McCain



TOM TOM CLUB

The Good, The Bad And The Funky

Tip Top-Rykodisc

OUT:

September 12

FILE UNDER:

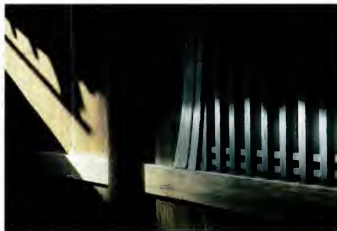
Grooves in search of songs

R.I.Y.L.:

Luscious Jackson, B-52's, Talking Heads

its charm. Listening to the band's mix of funk backbeat and '60s girl-group harmonies, you can hear where Luscious Jackson got their idea. The catchy "Happiness Can't Buy Money" and Pettigrew-sung ballad "Let There Be Love" will both make good additions to the group's eventual greatest-hits album. Less successful is "Who Feelin' It," a too-obvious "Genius Of Love" sequel that even samples the earlier hit. Since Frantz and Weymouth remain one of rock's most distinctive rhythm sections, you have to wonder why they replace themselves on most songs with programmed rhythm tracks that could be anybody's. This disc is invariably breezy and light, even when it's supposed to be sexy (would you believe a cover of Donna Summer's "Love To Love You Baby" without the groans?), but the Tom Tom Club are still feeling the lack of a first-class songwriter. **++**Brett Milano

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OUT:

July 18

FILE UNDER:

Contemporary jungle

R.I.Y.L.:

Ming & FS, Goldie, Ed Rush

DJ (Carlos) Soul Slinger is the guy behind the Liquid Sky/Jungle Sky label, and one of the East Coast's premier advocates of jungle, especially in its tech-steppier incarnations. He's made some nifty records on his own, especially his 1997 album *Don't Believe*, and his signature gesture is hybridizing high-speed breaks with Brazilian rhythms, which is a fine, original idea. So why is this mix CD so underwhelming? It's partly that Soul Slinger has picked a numbingly similar bunch of tracks: crisp, unfunky breaks, ultra-low bass blats and cheaply spooky

atmospheric noises, so much like each other that his mixes barely display any of the contrasts or surprises that better DJs easily pull off. And for all the liner notes' cant about "his homeland's rich musical history," the only sign of it is a bit of samba awkwardly shoehorned into the end of his own track "Zulu Transform." The set improves at the end, with a leap into hip-hop-flavored tracks—Uncle 22 rat-a-tat-tatting a fearsome beat around a snatch of Ghostface Killah and Mike & Ike's wholesale appropriation of Biz Markie's "Just A Friend." But in music as self-consciously-of-the-instant as Soul Slinger is spinning, he should know that a sample of Keanu saying "What is the Matrix?" is going to sound a little passé, and so are beats that sound like reheated tech-step from three years ago. **++**Douglas Wolk

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Right In The Nuts: A Tribute To Aerosmith
Small Stone

In a relatively short period of time, the burgeoning black-lunged stoner-rock underground has mercilessly strip-mined the quarries of '70s boogie-metal, from prime Blue Cheer to bottom-of-the-barrel Cactus. So it must've seemed like a good idea to set the second-generation stoner contingent loose on a new set of licks and promises—and picking the Stones-by-proxy swagger of Aerosmith was an inspired choice. If Black Sabbath is about putting someone's balls in a vice, Aerosmith's about stroking the cock in your pocket—"Rats In The Cellar" (here by

Speedball) and "Rock In A Hard Place (Cheshire Cat)" (Puny Human) allow a flexing of secondary rock 'n' roll muscles that tend to atrophy when you're engaged in repetitive-motion doom-drone exercises. But even with the inclusion of such veterans as Melvin Dale Crover (leading Altamont into "Make It"), Monster Magnet's Ed Mundell (prying loose "Combination" with Atomic Bitchwax) and former Butthole Surfer Jeff Pinkus (swallowing "Adam's Apple" with Honky), *Right In The Nuts* is way too stiff and—as a double-disc set—twice as long as it should've been. But it's still worth hearing, even if some of the highlights are songs that weren't written by Aerosmith performed by bands you've never heard of—like Volume's take on "Walkin' The Dog" and Natas's "Remember (Walking In The Sand)." **—Carly Caroli**

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Sing A Song For You: Tribute To Tim Buckley
Manifesto

Add Tim Buckley—Jeff's dad—to the ever-growing list of reconsidered singer/songwriters of the late '60s and early '70s. His music's progressive edge, meandering melodies, and pulsing stream-like rhythms owe more to jazz and the avant-garde than to the blues and country influences of his folkie contemporaries and have garnered him a cult following that continues to grow 25 years after his death. As expected, the various artists here—naturally weighted towards 4AD acts influenced by Buckley in the first place—include those who reproduce Buckley's singularity with

equally distinctive tact and those who fall back on the cliché of modern pop. Heather Duby, Dot Allison and the Lilys have recorded challenging material worth hearing. However, their aggressive takes on Buckley never tap into his solemn spiritual quest. The best interpretations take it slow. Screaming Trees singer Mark Lanegan, whose voice—deep, stubborn, incapable of great flight—is the polar opposite of Buckley's, anchors the obscure "Cafe." Neil Halstead, appearing both with his band Mojave 3 and more effectively as a solo act, turns "Phantasmagoria In Two" toward creepy meditation. Denver, Colorado's The Czars slowly unveil the majesty of "Song To The Siren." That these interpretations will likely inspire some listeners to seek out the Buckley originals is the best tribute of all. **—Rob O'Connor**

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CAETANO VELOSO

Prenda Minha
Blue Thumb-Verve

Perhaps Brazil's most accomplished pop musician, Caetano Veloso took the world music Grammy this year for his expansive bossa-nova-to-percussion-blowout album, *Livros*. *Prenda Minha* is a live set recorded in Rio at the height of the bossa nova stylings of the Grammy-winning album, its 20 tracks span Veloso's four-decade career, from solo takes on silken, whispery bossas to rowdy samba numbers with the thump and drive of batucada percussion and blasts of color from Veloso's spot-on horn section. The set

OUT:

July 25

FILE UNDER:

Brazilian master sessions

R.I.Y.L.:

Gilberto Gil, Jorge Ben, Milton Nascimento

has a satisfying overall shape, kicking off with a full band, moving into an introspective section with just Veloso and his nylon-string guitar for five tracks. Then the band returns and drives the performance home with force, precision and style. Veloso's genius for arranging comes through often, as on his inventive take on Antonio Carlos Jobim's classic "Meditação," which blends muted horns, shivering bowed strings, and the crack of Bahian percussion. Cool jazz and bossa are central to Veloso's elegant creations, and these styles feature his clear, supple voice, a truly stunning instrument. But when he gets his band to pull out the stops as on the breathless "Eclipse Oculto" or his punched-up take on *Livros*' sassy "Não Enche," no carnival trio electrico could hope to top the energy level. **—Banning Eyre**



VIRGINWOOL

Open Heart Surgery Breaking-Atlantic

Virginwool singer Jordan Pouzner has the kind of ardent, doe-eyed delivery that makes young girls (and maybe even a few boys) swoon. On the Orlando, Florida foursome's major-label debut, Pouzner wraps his sensitive-guy pipes around heart-tugging hooks and stadium-sized choruses that pile up faster than you can say "Matchbox Twenty sells another million." In keeping with what's become something of a pop-rock, balladeering tradition among Southeast-based acts like Sister Hazel, Hootie and Rob Thomas's aforementioned outfit, Virginwool plays it straight, eschewing cool irony for

OUT:

August 8

FILE UNDER:

Radio-ready rock

R.I.Y.L.:

Matchbox Twenty, Hootie & The Blowfish, Push Stars

straightforward sincerity. Not that there's anything wrong with that. Virginwool's boys know who their audience is, and on tracks like "You're The Girl" they deliver capable modern-rock crunch to their constituents. "Between The Lines" is a two-hanky, piano-and-guitar slice o' cheese that's somewhere between U2's "One" and KISS's "Beth." And trying to shake off the efficient melody that drives the Bon Jovi-esque "Better For You" is like trying to shed a tenacious tick that's attached itself to your leg at a barbecue. As a sturdy foundation of guitars supports Pouzner's strident stretch toward the heavens, he goes for the jugular, breaking out a batch of falsetto woo-woos that would inspire even Bono to break out his Bic. It's not called *Open Heart Surgery* for nothing. **—Jonathan Perry**

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THE WALLFLOWERS

Brach Interscope

Four years ago, with *Bringing Down The Horse*, Jakob Dylan proved it didn't really matter how well he matched up to his father as a songwriter, because boy, could he move the units. Of course, the senior Dylan has never been in danger of becoming a one-hit-wonder of any kind, and that remains a very real possibility for a band like Jakob's Wallflowers—a vaguely rootsy, mostly middle-of-the-road guitar-rock outfit that is at least as dependent upon airplay as they are on the loyalty of their fans. So it's no real surprise that Jakob plays it relatively safe on *Brach*, a respectable—if somewhat

OUT:

October 10

FILE UNDER:

Comfortably catchy heartland rock

R.I.Y.L.:

Tom Petty, Graham Parker, Everclear

predictable—follow-up to *Bringing Down The Horse* that won't challenge or disappoint Wallflowers fans. There's nothing here as immediately catchy as "The Difference," but there are plenty of comfortably sung and strummed numbers that get the job done like a broken-in pair of Levi's. Jakob might be better off avoiding cryptic nonsense like "You've been used by an army of kings/ You've been touched by the lips of a queen" ("Hand Me Down") because lyrics like that are only going to raise unfavorable comparisons to his dad. But he's also capable of appearing a chip off the old rock, like the line he nails in the chorus of "Sleepwalker": "Cupid don't draw back your bow/ Sam Cooke didn't know what I know". **—Matt Ashare**

ROB WASSERMAN

Space Island

Atlantic

There are countless ways to know upright bass badass Rob Wasserman. Maybe you're a Deadhead who's into his work with Ratdog and Bob Weir. Maybe you've heard him with Branford Marsalis, Lou Reed or Elvis Costello. Maybe you're a bluegrass buff who knows him from way back in the David Grisman Quintet. Or was it Solo (1983), Duets (1988), Trios (1994) or his collaboration with drummer Stephen Perkins in Banyan? Take the best parts from all of that, add appearances by Banyaners Perkins and trumpeter Willie Waldman, P-Funk percussionist Carl "Butch" Small and Snoop and Dre's DJ

Jam, as well as production by Dave Aron, and you've got Space Island, not so much an exotic location as a state of musical mind. Taking a walk on the "Wildside" with Wasserman is more like blowing through a town of funky spaghetti-Western instrumental jazzscape than the streets of New York Reed rock. "Love Song" and "Nu Ballad" radiate romance like Béla Fleck likes to play it, while "Got To Rock" and "Feel The Bass" tip funk toward a little turntable scratching. The soothing "Sultan Song," featuring Sultan Khan on the sarangi, hints at the boundlessness of this album's scope. Still, it's "Hillbilly Hip Hop" that's probably the best example of multi-genre mish mash—country guitar slides, bass-boomin' groove, rap rhymes. Like they say in the song, "This ain't no acid...funk...jazz...or dread-lock...rock." It's pure Wasserman. —Robin A. Rothman

DAR WILLIAMS

The Green World

Razor & Tie

Dar Williams is the benign ruler of a small but prospering duchy in which citizens are not just encouraged but enabled to pursue satisfying spiritual, emotional and intellectual quests. The Green World, her fourth album on Razor & Tie, takes its title from something she once read in a Shakespeare class. The song "And God Descended" has for its inspiration an L.B. Singer story about a failed messianic movement: It posits belief versus reason while giving both a fair shake, as the potent, rhythmic verses have a pretty fair shake as well. The penetratingly intelligent "I Had No Right"

deals with the complex motivations of the Berrigan Brothers, antiwar priests whose fondness for direct action landed them in jail. She's got a keen eye for effective metaphor: "I Won't Be Your Yoko Ono" is about both a person and symbol, a stirring affirmation of Williams's own artistic ambitions and emotional needs. "Playing To The Firmament" has big drums, big synths, a big chorus and a big-sounding band playing what sounds like a big Cajun wedding march. But as it and the oughta-be-hit-single, "What Do You Love More Than Love" prove, Williams has more: big talent, big heart, big soul. —Wayne Robins

Let's take a look behind the curtain. The majority of DJ CDs on the shelves—be they of techno, house, breakbeat or downbeat temperaments—aim and claim to capture the experience of the featured artist in a live club setting. Yet the reality is that very few of these albums are actually recorded live. Some of them aren't even recorded using turntables: They're as studio-produced and digitally developed as the Smashing Pumpkins' most recent schwa. Even though most artists have the talent to record a CD-quality mix on the fly (years of practice have made their performances nearly flawless), many a remarkable set has been left on the mastering-studio floor because the track that blew the roof off the club turned out to be the bad apple that was denied licensing clearance. With its new Mixed Live series, Moonshine Music takes the road rarely traveled and suffers through the red tape of track licensing to present the world's A-class DJs performing at some of the States' most respected clubs. Britain's **Carl Cox** kicks off the run with the three-turntable attack that devastated a standing-room only crowd at Chicago's Crobar nightclub last May. The difference between this and his previous releases (along with the crowd cheers and audible tweaking of a few imperfect mixes) lies in the spontaneous energy that erupts throughout the set. Cox drops a full-on assault of techno and hard house mayhem, assembled with the long-mixing, record-flanging, beat-juggling expertise that characterizes his live performance, aspects rarely highlighted in his numerous studio mixes. New crowd-pleasers by Christian Smith & John Selway ("Cosmopolitan"), Humate ("Choose Life") and Deetron ("Don't Know Why") are some of the highlights of this one-take-only performance.... **Groove Armada**, the London-based producer duo distinguished by the organic jazz, funk and R&B vibes that decorate their warm, synthetic soul, became one of the more original acts to find favor with DJs and dancefloors in the late '90s. **Back To Mine** (Ultra), the second release from the downtown DJ mix series, brings fans back to the sources of the duo's musical design. The 14-track mix plays out like an eclectic, home-produced mixtape, including sexy and sultry standout cuts from Barry White ("Playing Your Game Baby"), A Tribe Called Quest ("Description Of A Fool") and Tears For Fears ("Pharaohs"), as well as several other retro gems. But the disc's delightfully diverse music—bound together by each track's allegiance to old-school funk—is cleverly and seamlessly assembled by the team, whose DJ skills prove as prolific as their in-studio and on-stage antics. Running from old soul to futuristic deep house, it's an after-hours set perfectly tailored for horizontal grooving....

DJ Rap (born Charissa Saverio) stunned more than a few drum 'n' bass heads with her 1999 album, *Learning Curve*, a compendium of frilly vocals and flimsy electro-pop temperaments that ran in sharp contrast to the rough and rigorous breakbeat tunes she championed in the early '90s. But *Brave New World* (Intuit-Solar), her latest release (with respected d'n'b maven **Kenny Ken**) shows that the new dance diva hasn't completely forgotten her roots in the underground. Riding tall drum rhythms and loose bass rolls throughout the 13-track set, the duo blasts through a collection of tunes from some of the head honchos of the scene. Mickey Finn ("Rich Get Richer"), Ray Keith ("Shark Attack"), and DJ SS ("Static") all get their due respects, while

Kenny Ken's "M3" serves as one of the peak points of the disc. Ms. Rap's recently acquired fanbase also gets the chance to relive some of her pre-Calvin Klein poster girl material through the inclusion of three old-school originals—"Subtronic," "Frequency" and "Proteus"—all produced with G Squad. —M. Tye Comer



OUT:
August 15
FILE UNDER:
Bassy loops and grooves
R.I.Y.L.:
Banyan, Ratdog, Béla Fleck



OUT:
August 22
FILE UNDER:
Folk and pop
R.I.Y.L.:
Suzanne Vega, Van Morrison, Joan Osborne

SAXON, DRUGS AND ROCK 'N' ROLL: SCANDINAVIA'S SCHOOL OF HARD ROCK

STORY: CARLY CARIOLI

It would be a mistake to say that the high-octane musical legacy of such Motor City madmen as Ted Nugent, Bob Seger, the MC5 and Iggy Pop failed to produce an heir in modern-day Motown. It has, and alas, his name is Kid Rock. But aside from the Kid and bands like Nashville Pussy, production of the quintessentially American rock Detroit once manufactured as reliably as tailfins has shifted elsewhere.

The trade deficit skyrocketed in 1996, when Sweden's Hellacopters released their debut album, *Supershitty To The Max* (White Jazz; reissued in the US on Man's Ruin in 1998)—a needle-in-the-red onslaught, equal parts Stooges and KISS, Motörhead and AC/DC, sped up to near-hardcore velocity. Since *Supershitty*, which won a Swedish hard rock Grammy, there's been a deluge of vitriolic, hell-for-leather hard rock issuing from the Scandinavian countries—Gluecifer and the dearly departed Turbonegro from Norway; the Hellacopters and Backyard Babies putting Sweden back on the map; and scads more popping up in the singles bins.

Electric Frankenstein guitarist Sal Canzonieri, who's been documenting the international renaissance in back-to-basics punk on a set of 12 compilation CDs called *A Fistful Of Rock N' Roll* for the US

indie label Tee Pee Records, says that's just the tip of the iceberg. About a dozen Scandinavian punk and rock acts have appeared on the first six volumes of *Fistful*—from Turbonegro and Gluecifer down to less well-known sleaze-rockers like the Nitwitz and Puffball—with another dozen or so scheduled to appear on future volumes. "I think the best bands are from Norway and Finland," says Canzonieri, who traces the latest wave of Scandinavian rock to mid-'90s European jaunts by the New Bomb Turks and the Supersuckers. "There's a lot of new ones who are much better than the Hellacopters, that blow away a lot of stuff from here."

There is a certain sizzle to much of the new Scandinavian rock that you'd be hard-pressed to find at all in the United States. "You can't really call it punk, and you can't really call it hard rock," says Gluecifer drummer Danny Young. "It's something in between, and that's exactly the kind of music we want to play and want to listen to. It's what gets our rocks off." But who'd expect a full-blown rock invasion from a region known more for its dichotomy of slick dance-pop confections and icy, infernal death metal? One notable convert is guitarist Andreas Axelsson, formerly of Swede deathmetalers Edge Of Sanity and now in the

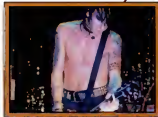
Gluecifer: Norway Breaking out of Norway at about the same time as the Hellacopters were blowing up in Sweden, Gluecifer proclaimed themselves "No. 1 Kings Of Rock" and then set about proving it. As with all great rock 'n' roll leaps forward, Gluecifer's involved a new way of hearing the past. Their 1997 album, *Leather Chair* (White Jazz, Import), imagined a universe where Chuck Berry, Angus Young, Glenn Danzig and Zodiac Mindwarp were all on the same page—a crushing metallic melodicism grounded in timeless rock 'n' roll swagger, tempered by a speedy punkish economy. The follow-up, *Scaring With The Eagles At Night...* (White Jazz), took their KISS worship one step too far, but their new, frightfully swift, broadly imagined *Tender Is The Savage* (Sub Pop) has the delicious pacing, cheap-thrills hooks and big-budget pyrotechnics to match the hard-rock kings of yore.



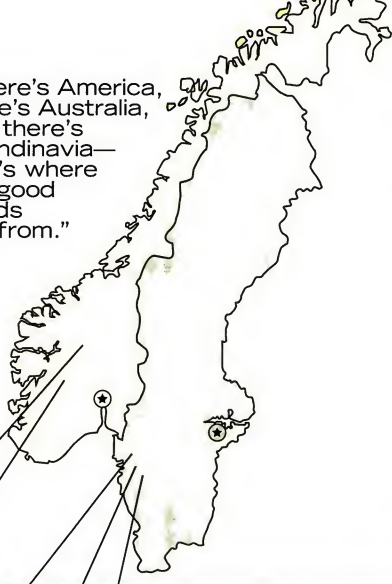
Turbonegro: Norway Long before the Hellacopters raided American record bins, Nordic wildmen Turbonegro declared an all-out death-punk assault on the States. They issued a couple of early-'90s singles on Sympathy For The Record Industry, but 1997's *Ass Cobra* (on Sympathy) more formally introduced American audiences to the band's incendiary mix of denim, man-on-man love and degenerate rock 'n' roll. Self-proclaimed "Zillion Dollar Socialists" who flaunted their Über-machismo with Village People-like sailor outfits and infectious anthems such as "Rendezvous With Anus," they were nearly superstars in Europe by the time their 1997 album *Apocalypse Dudes* arrived on these shores in January 1999 (reissued on Man's Ruin). Taking punk cues from the Dictators and the Stooges' *Raw Power*, and their dueling-guitar leads from AC/DC and Judas Priest, they seemed poised for a breakthrough, but broke up just before the disc's American release. This fall, garage-rock label Get Hip is reissuing the band's back catalogue.



Backyard Babies: Sweden Although guitarist Dregen first came to the attention of American audiences as Nickie Andersson's maniacal foil in the Hellacopters, his primary vehicle since the early '90s had been a glam-punk outfit called Backyard Babies. By the time Dregen left the Hellacopters to concentrate on the Babies full-time, they'd evolved into a spectacularly tough and glittery rock 'n' roll band who perhaps come closer than any other current band to the sweet and savage spirit of the New York Dolls. Total 13, the Babies' crowning 1998 masterpiece, was reissued last year by Scooch Pooch in the US. It's full of whopping Marshall-stack crunch and catchy three-chord outlawry, with the occasional foray into proto-psychedelic overdrive.



"There's America, there's Australia, and there's Scandinavia—that's where the good bands are from."



Deadbeats, one of the rare Swedish punk 'n' roll groups to get an American record deal before releasing anything in Europe.

"In the small town where I lived there was a really strong underground scene punk-wise as far back as the mid-'80s," he says. "We've always been listening to American punk-rock bands because they're really good at what they do. As you start to listen to music when you're pretty small, you listen to all those AC/DC and KISS records, so maybe [now] we just found our roots, you might say."

And if those roots are located in lands and bands several thousand miles and an ocean away, the irony has not been lost on them: One of the Hellacopters' Swedish labelmates, the Turpentines, recently released an album (available only on import in the US) entitled *American Music For American People*. "I think Scandinavia has always been good at copying or adapting the American lifestyle, and rock 'n' roll is very much a part of that," says Hellacopters frontman Nicke Andersson, who proudly owns up to nicking riffs from AC/DC, KISS and the MC5. "There's America, there's Australia, and there's Scandinavia—that's where the good bands are from. So I guess we got a pretty good scene here."

The Hellacopters: Sweden

Around 1991, Nicke Andersson ran into Colle van Schewern, one of the principals behind the Swede label White Jazz. "He said, 'I'm going to play you the best song ever,'" recalls Andersson. "It was like, 'Yeah, right.'" The song was "City Song" by Sonic's Rendezvous Band, perhaps the most obscure supergroup in Detroit history. Formed in the '70s by the MC5's Fred "Sonic" Smith with the Stooges' Scott Asheton and Ratliff's guitarist Scott Morgan while Wayne Kramer was in Joll, the Rendezvous recordings have only been reissued in the past year or so. "They were probably too punk for the real rockers and too soul or rock 'n' roll for the punk-rockers, so nothing happened with them," says Andersson. "If I think about it, that's probably our biggest influence.... Not that we sound like that, because we couldn't if we tried." Still, it's a pretty sturdy blueprint—one the Hellacopters have applied to their own omolog of KISS and AC/DC-inspired hard rock on albums such as *Supershitty To The Max* and *Payin' The Dues* (White Jazz, 1997; reissued on Sub Pop in 1999). Last year's *Grande Rock* (Sub Pop) suffered slightly from the departure of founding guitarist Dregen, who provided a glam-punk counterpoint. The Hellacopters recently recorded a pair of singles co-written by and featuring the Rendezvous Band's Scott Morgan (who also plays with Andersson and members of Finland's Nifwiz in a side-project called the Hydromatics), resulting in some of their finest tracks yet.

The Deadbeats: Sweden

If you don't mind suffering the exchange rates on foreign Web-stores like Amazon's UK affiliate (www.amazon.co.uk) and Tower Records' European site (www.towerseurope.com), you can find import albums by a multitude of top-shelf acts like Sweden's Psychopunch, whose bolshy tunes offer up plenty of pop-metal hooks as well as a meaty power-chord fury as dense and uplifting as anything by U.S. Bombs. But some of the good stuff is also beginning to show up domestically. Sweden's Deadbeats were lucky enough to land a deal with American label Necropoll's rock offshoot, Fueled Up Records, and their self-titled debut romps furiously through the detritus of the years before punk had a name. On "Hey Baby!" singer/guitarist "Awesome" Andreas Axelsson knows he's found true love when he sees a girl play "Ace Of Spades" on the jukebox. "We really don't listen that much to punk rock right now," says Axelsson. "We listen to Electric Frankenstein and Supersuckers, but right now we get our influences more from the Who or AC/DC—it's more hard rock. But since we can't play that good it sounds a little bit punk rock."

| | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| 1 | MODEST MOUSE | The Moon & Antarctica | Epic |
| 2 | SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE | The Rising Tide | Time Bomb |
| 3 | BELE AND SEBASTIAN | Aid Your Hands Child | Jeepster-Motador |
| 4 | SDNIC YOUTH | NYC Ghosts & Flowers | Geffen-Interscope |
| 5 | ARAB STRAP | Reigning Shade | Jetset |
| 6 | JURASSIC-5 | Quality Control | Interscope |
| 7 | HANDY WARRIORS | Thirteen Tales From Urban Bohemia | Capitol |
| 8 | TRANS AM | You Can Always Get What You Want | Thrill Jockey |
| 9 | BILLY BRAGG & VULCO | Mermaid Avenue Vol. II | Floater |
| 10 | DEFTONES | White Pony | Maverick |
| 11 | NICHKAS ASCHROFT | Along With Everybody | Not-Virgin |
| 12 | A PERFECT CIRCLE | Mer De Noms | Virgin |
| 13 | CATHERINE WHEEL | Wavelength | Columbia |
| 14 | PRIMAL SCREAM | XTRMNT | Creation-Astralwerks |
| 15 | UDA | Wink You Find Me | Tiger Style |
| 16 | LAND OF THE LOOPS | Puttering About A Small Land | Up |
| 17 | TOADY GUERRE | A Little Bit Of Something | No Wax-Scuzzars-Buyout |
| 18 | AIME MANN | Bachelor No. 2 | SuperEgo |
| 19 | KAN WELCH | The New America | Atlantic |
| 20 | QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE | R | Interscope |
| 21 | STEREOLAB | The First Of The Incredible Years | Klaxon |
| 22 | BT | Movement In Still Life | Netwerk |
| 23 | BLONDE REDHEAD | Melody Of Certain Demographic Lessons | Youth And Ru |
| 24 | NOFX | Pump Up The Volume | Epitaph |
| 25 | PERDS THE LION | Progress (EP) | Barclay-Square |
| 26 | GRANDADDDY | The Software Slump | V2 |
| 27 | WEATHER-KINNEY | All kinds of the Best One | Kill Rock Stars |
| 28 | MURDER CITY DEVILS | In Name And Blood | Sub Pop |
| 29 | STEVE EARLE | Transcendental Blues | F-Squared-Arsonist |
| 30 | BEDHEAD/MACHA | Bedhead Loved Macha | Jetset |
| 31 | BRADY | The Ever Pulling Moment | ADM-Interscope |
| 32 | ELLIOTT SMITH | Figure 8 | DreamWorks |
| 33 | VERNON YARD | Forever Here | Kernig & Maxwell |
| 34 | JAYHAWKS | Smile | American-Columbia |
| 35 | SHARPLESS | Scenes At Water | Sub Pop |
| 36 | DILATED PEOPLES | The Platform | Capitol |
| 37 | KEFauver | Love, Nothing At All | Elephant-Adams Rock |
| 38 | TAHITI 80 | Puzzle | Minty Fresh |
| 39 | SONAR | The Distance Of Day Time | Irish Pictures |
| 40 | CONCRETES | Boycouetteurrow | Up |
| 41 | SHAKERS SET | The Last Music | Shankabond |
| 42 | HER SPACE HOLIDAY | Home Is Where You Hang Yourself | Tiger Style |
| 43 | LOPES | The Good Inside | Sub Pop |
| 44 | THE PROMISE RING | Electric Pink (EP) | Jade Tree |
| 45 | KINGSTON ROSE MICHAELEN | Blissful In Sex | Mika |
| 46 | FACE TO FACE | Reactionary | Beyond-LadyLuck |
| 47 | SHLEAD GYPSYHAWK | Paint And Concrete | Atlantic |
| 48 | EXPLDSION | Flash Flash Flash | Jade Tree |
| 49 | CALEXICO | Wot Mail | Lochin And We |
| 50 | LOVE-CARS | I'm Friends With All Stars | No Alternative |
| 51 | THE MOOSE AND THE SHANTON MUSIC BAND | Shannon's for King | Kernig-Maxwell |
| 52 | XTC | Wasp Star (Apple Venus Volume 2) | TVT |
| 53 | BUILT TO SPOIL | Live | Warner Bros. |
| 54 | AMAZING CROWNS | Royal | Time Bomb |
| 55 | THWIGHT CIRCUS BLUE SOUND SYSTEM | Blue Voyage | M. (Nemacour) |
| 56 | B.B. KING & ERIC CLAPTON | Riding With The King | Reprise |
| 57 | AMON TUBIN | Guamouth | Ninja Tune |
| 58 | JULIANA HATFIELD/JULIANA'S PDNY | Beautiful Creature/Total System Failure | Zoe-Rounder |
| 59 | CHICKADEE UNDERGROUND | Synthesia | Thru-Jockey |
| 60 | BANGS | Sweet Revenge | Kill Rock Stars |
| 61 | VARIOUS ARTISTS | Bound To The Present Land | WordStar |
| 62 | JAZZ JUNE | The Medicine | Initial |
| 63 | DEKARDS | The Great Eastern | Wegman-Buyout |
| 64 | DIANDAH | Battle Champions | Southern |
| 65 | DIRTY TRAILS | Dirty Trails | Atlantic |
| 66 | KODD TAYLOR | Royal Blue | Alligator |
| 67 | TRUTE | A Place Called Home | TVT |
| 68 | VERUCA SALT | Resolver | Beyond |
| 69 | VARIOUS ARTISTS | Songs In The Key Of B | Whitely |
| 70 | CLEM SNIDE | Your Favorite Music | Sire |
| 71 | AVUL | Tom Women | San Marcos Records |
| 72 | TSAR | Tsar | Hollywood |
| 73 | BOWLING FOR DOLLS | Songs From An American Movie Vol. 1 | Mercury |
| 74 | CUOIE | Peep Show | Music Company-Elektra |
| 75 | FILE | | Waxstar |



#1 MODEST MOUSE The Moon & Antarctica Epic

FIVE YEARS AGO

1. BJORK

POST (ELEKTRA)

2. PRIMUS

TALES FROM THE PUNCHBOWL (INTERSCOPE)

3. THE VERVE

A NORTHERN SOUL (VERNON YARD)

4. THE CATHERINE WHEEL

HAPPY DAYS (FONTANA-MERCURY)

5. FUGAZI

RED MEDICINE (DISCORD)

TEN YEARS AGO

1. SONIC YOUTH

GOO (DGC)

2. BREEDERS

POD (4AD-ROUGH TRADE)

3. ADRIAN BELEV

YOUNG LIONS (ATLANTIC)

4. THE SUNDAYS

READING WRITING AND ARITHMETIC (DGC)

5. JESUS JONES

LIQUIDIZER (SIRI)



Chart data culled from CMJ New Music Report's weekly Top 250 radio chart, based on combined airplay of approximately 500 college, non-commercial and commercial radio stations reporting their top 30 most played records that week. "It's like butter, but it's buttered pop. And it's good." - Frank Zappa

TOP 25

- 1 IRON MAIDEN
Brave New World POKYTRAIT/COLUMBIA
- 2 EARTH CRISIS
Slither victory
- 3 VARIOUS ARTISTS
Nativity In Black II DIVINE-PURITY
- 4 KING DIAMOND
House Of God METAL BLADE
- 5 CEPHALIC CARNAGE
Exploiting Dysfunction RELAPSE
- 6 OICIDE
Insensatebyrhythm ROADRUNNER
- 7 STUCK MOOD
Declaration Of A Headhunter CENTURY MEDIA
- 8 DEFTONES
White Pony MAVEINX
- 9 MOTORHEAD
We Are Motorhead CMC INTERNATIONAL
- 10 IN FLAMES
Clayman NUCLEAR BLAST AMERICA
- 11 KATAKLYSM
The Prophecy... NUCLEAR BLAST AMERICA
- 12 VENOM
Resurrection STEAMHAMMER
- 13 A PERFECT CIRCLE
Mer De Noms VIRGIN
- 14 ULTRASPAK
Progress epic
- 15 LUDOTE CLOME
The Arsenal And The Archhich RELAPSE
- 16 DESTRUCTION
All Hell Breaks Loose NUCLEAR BLAST AMERICA
- 17 NASUM
Human 2.0 RELAPSE
- 18 E-TOWN CONCRETE
The Second Coming TRIPLE CROWN
- 19 SHADOWS FALL
Of One Blood CENTURY MEDIA
- 20 TAPROOT
Gift VELVET HAMMER-ATLANTIC
- 21 DISTURBED
The Sickness/Gamer Of The Sickness EP GRANT-REPRISE
- 22 MADBALL
Hold It Down EPITAPH
- 23 BOY SETS FIRE
After The Eulogy victory
- 24 IMMORTAL
Damned In Black OSMOSE
- 25 GLASSJAW
Everything You Ever Wanted To Know... ROADRUNNER



Compiled from CMJ New Music Report's weekly Loud Rock charts, collected from CMJ's pool of progressive radio listeners.

>>> **Exciter** likes its power fantasies intense. After a couple



PICK!

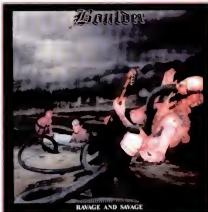
Death and Shamu by delivering some educated nihilism that still sounds big, heavy and dumb. *Ravage And Savage* (Tee Pee) proves that the Melvins and Motörhead left a lot of room for interpretation via Flying V guitar, and Boulder takes advantage of the terrain to drop a few hundred heavy ticks. The CD version of *Ravage* also includes last year's *The Rage Of It All* (River On Fire) in the form of 10 bonus tracks.... Oh, the injustice!

Opprobrium, a New Orleans thrash act of Brazilian refugees, recently lost their simpler old brand name, Incubus, in a legal fight with another band. The buckling thrashatorium of Discerning Forces (Nuclear Blast America) has garage rage ripping out of every side, sounding like a drunken Sepultura or



of duff albums and career stalls, *Blood Of Tyrants* (Osmose USA) restores the majesty the Ottawa thrashers lost to Metallica and Slayer many moons ago. Exciter's *Heavy Metal Maniac* and *Violence & Force* were once the albums to beat—the hardcore metal era's answer to Judas Priest. Having long since replaced star singing drummer Dan Beehler with two young usurpers, Exciter 2000 finally reclaims its cult status and lives up to its moniker. John Ricci's squealing guitar solos are as inspired with metal insanity as ever, and the anthems built around them are enormous. The lyrics don't make any sense, but they support the screams with a stream of active ingredients: "The force of/ The molten mass/ Hear the thunder/ Metal crusaders."

>>> The self-aware, self-deprecating and fairly self-involved Aurora, Ohio band **Boulder** follows in the tracks of local heroes Devo, Dead Boys, Destructor, Black



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Opprobrium, a New Orleans thrash act of Brazilian refugees, recently lost their simpler old brand name, Incubus, in a legal fight with another band. The buckling thrashatorium of Discerning Forces (Nuclear Blast America) has garage rage ripping out of every side, sounding like a drunken Sepultura or a half-drunk Deceased. It's rare to find veterans with this much spunk, or newcomers with this much spirit, and Opprobrium rides successfully through the divide. Hopefully this decade the band's name will appeal more to metalheads than entertainment lawyers.... Chuck D and Professor Griff of Public Enemy contribute heavily to the new hard rock act **Confrontation Camp**, whose debut *Objects In The Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear* (Artemis) seems an attempt to complement the black rock direction founded by Funkadelic in the '70s. As Chuck says: "We ain't waiting to be accepted, like Living Colour, we're just going out and taking it." Sounds good, but Vernon Reid's outfit was a catchy platinum-selling rock band during Metal's late-'80s heyday; C.C. is more like a rock-in-rap history lesson of merit mainly in relation to the Kid Rock fad.

NEWS



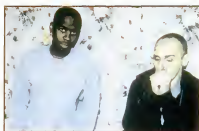
The pure-hearted Norwegian metal tome **Slayer Magazine**, known for printing more Bathory, Mayhem and Emperor interviews per issue than any other known publication, has returned after a brief crisis of faith. Rather than throw in the towel after 15 years, editor Jon "Metalion" Kristiansen returns with the latest installment of destructive leather-and-spikes journalism. One hundred pages of interviews here cover Sadistik Exekution, Death SS, Destruction, Nasty Savage, Gorgoroth, and of course Mayhem, with additional writing by jailed Emperor drummer Bard Faust. Also included (as per tradition): plenty of drawings of kangaroos wearing kangaroo masks while burning cartoon churches. (US\$8.00 to *Slayer Mag*, Box 447, 1703 Sarpsborg, Norway.

>>>It's **Carl Craig's** year—we're just in it. After organizing



PICK!

produced something to be ashamed of. *Japanese Telecom* is a delicious melding of Detroit ghetto-funk influences and Japanese fetishism on an analog electro canvas, where tracks bang and pop briskly along like a game of *Final Fantasy* that's playing you. If there is anything to complain about here, it's the length: The record clocks in at 33 minutes, including three remixes. But it's not size that matters, right? As for the ID, let's say that if you're a fan of Doppleereffekt, Drexciya or Ectomorph, you'll really like this record. Wink-wink.... **DJ Disciple** has been a mainstay on the New York garage scene for more than 10 years. His newly released *My True Colors* (Catch 22) marks his full-length debut as a producer, and it's just as, well, garage-y as his mix efforts and DJ gigs would lead one to expect. The 14 groove and soul house tracks (and the standout drum 'n' bass offering, "Speaking In Tongues") generally stay in classic—as



DIRTY BEATNIKS

nothing wrong with that. "Disco Dancing Machines" is bouncy, trousse-y fun, and the "I love it/ I love every second of it" chorus is infectious; while other tracks, such as "Kris Krossiferson" [sic] layer Richard Fearless's, I mean Mau's, voice atop a swirling dirge of trippy filtered guitar sounds.

the enormously successful and progressive Detroit Electronic Music Festival, bringing hip-hop, techno and thousands of fans together in the Motor City, the dancefloor innovator moves forward by taking a step back. His *Designer Music: The Remixes Volume One* (Planet E) collects nine Craig remixes previously released only on vinyl—which means it offers a first chance for many fans to give these tracks a spin at home. Source material ranges from Latin jazz (Johnny Blas) to club hits (BT's "Moment Of Truth") to classics (Telex's "Moskow Diskow")—all clearly imprinted with Craig's indelible techno-soul stamp. The best of the collection is easily his take on Inner City's "Good Life," which is stripped to the title vocal snippet and a minimal hi-hat, then gradually builds to a burbling, thumping techno froth. Or maybe it's the Ron Trent "Altered States" mix, which builds a jazzy-but-relentless stormer around the recognizable hook from the original. Or maybe....

>>>Who is **Japanese Telecom**? The producer behind this self-titled debut album (Intuit-Solar) may insist on anonymity, but it sure isn't because he's



opposed to cliché—territory. (OK, the world doesn't ever need another track with a Numan "Cars" sample, so shame on him for "Still Ghetto.") "You" bounds from the speakers with funk licks, trumpet and Angie Johnson R&B stylings; "The GBH Show" is pure filtered funk; and "The Brazilian Affair" offers the Latin-flavored prerequisite of any garage batch.... **Dirty Beatniks**, the London-based rave-rock duo of singer Mau and producer Neil "Beatnick" Higgins, have just released *Feedback* (Wall Of Sound), and it's sure to draw its share of criticism. The first question that should be asked of Bobby Gillespie, I mean Mau, is if he realizes how much the group sounds like Primal Scream, so there's

At least they sound like the good parts of Primal Scream, so there's

NEWS



The good fight is being fought: The **San Francisco Late Night Coalition** is setting a national standard on how to organize parties and conduct yourself while attending (www.sfnclm.com). And you may want to sign up for the e-mail list at The Right To Dance coalition's homepage, www.righttodance.org. It may not be the drugs that are making you paranoid.

TOP 25

- 1 SASHA AND JOHN DIEWEED
Communicate KINETIC
- 2 SANDRA COLLINS
Transcort 3 KINETIC
- 3 AMON TOBIN
Supermodified MINA TIME
- 4 POLE
3 HAZARD
- 5 BT
Movement In Still Life HETTERWIND
- 6 ADAM FREELAND
Technics ULTRA
- 7 LIT BUKEM
Journey Inwards KINETIC
- 8 PAUL VAN DYK
Out There And Back JUVIE
- 9 FUNKER BOGT
Maschine Zeit METROPOLIS
- 10 DARREN EMERSON
Global Undergrounds: Uruguay BAKER
- 11 P'TAH
Compressed Light UNBURY
- 12 VIV MATTION
Empires METROPOLIS
- 13 DJ DB
The Higher Education From Y's Bass WALKER EDUCATION 4-11
- 14 DJ KRUSH
Code4108 RED HIK
- 15 GREEN VELVET
Green Velvet E-111-WALKER WIDE
- 16 DJ FOOD
Kaleidoscope MINA TIME
- 17 FINK
Fresh Produce MINA TIME
- 18 PRIMAL SCREAM
XTREMINT CREATION-AUSTALWORKS
- 19 WE
Decentertainment LIQUID SKY
- 20 VARIOUS ARTISTS
Virion Sequences CASHED
- 21 DJ CAM
Lao Project (Volume II) SIX DEGREES
- 22 SOUNDTRACK
Groove KINETIC
- 23 TOMMY GUERRERO
A Little Bit Of Something NO WALL-BEACON BANGUET
- 24 VARIOUS ARTISTS
Resist The Command, O'UTSTATION
- 25 SMITH & MIGHTY
Bass Is Material STORM 47



Compiled from CMJ New Music Report's weekly RPM charts, collected from CMJ's staff of progressive radio reporters.

TOP 25

- 1 JURASSIC-5
"Quality Control" INTERSCOPE
- 2 DE LA SOUL FEAT. REDMAN
"000H" TUNNY BOY
- 3 QUALIFIED PEOPLES
"The Platform" BIG-CAPITOL
- 4 BUMPY KNUCKLES
"Tell 'Em I'm Here" KROC-LANDSPEED
- 5 QUASIMOTO
"Come On Feet" STONES THROW-NU GRUV
- 6 BAHAMADA FEAT. PLANET ASIA, RASCO...
"Special Forces" GOODVIBE-ATOMIC POP
- 7 COMMON
"The Light" INCA
- 8 CASH BROWN
"Clubber Lang" MAJOR LEAGUE
- 9 EMINEM
"The Real Slim Shady" AFTERMATH-INTERSCOPE
- 10 MISSIN' LINK
"Family Ties" STIMULATED-LOUD
- 11 EXCORE
"Love & Hate" JS ARK
- 12 CAMTRON
"That's Me" EPIC
- 13 TONY TOUCH
"The Diaz Brothers"/"The Piccadilly" TUNNY BOY
- 14 M.O.P.
"Ante Up" LNUD-COLUMBIA
- 15 RACK LO
"Spit in Yo Face" FBI BEATS
- 16 CYPRESS HILL
"Superstar" COLUMBIA
- 17 INFESTICIONS
"Gun Hill Road" BIG BADA
- 18 PHARDAHE MONCH
"The Light" BANNUS
- 19 LIL' KIM
"No Matter What They Say" UNDEAS-ATLANTIC
- 20 NEXTMEN
"Buck Foolish" JS ARK
- 21 FATLIP
"What's Up Fatlip" BELUCIOUS VINYL
- 22 MASTERMINDS
"No Test" GROUND CONTROL-NU GRUV
- 23 JAY-Z FEAT. URB
"Big Pimpin'" ROC-A-FELLA-DEF JAM
- 24 KURUPT
"Ride With Us" ANTRA-ARTEMIS
- 25 CASTRO
"New York" ARISTA



Compiled from *CMJ* New Music Reports weekly best box charts, collected from CMJ's post of progressive radio reports.

>>>There are tons of DJ compilations out these days,



PICK!

(MCs Booka-T, Water Water, Hypno, J.D. and singer Ming-Xia), augmented by a very solid live band, takes the energy and imagination of the Roots and pushes it into a fresh new realm. A big reason for the difference is Ming-Xia, whose Björk-meets-Dolores O'Riordan-shaded tones float over every track, sometimes in the background, sometimes way up front. It's hypnotizing, intelligent, strong-minded and abundantly positive. Tracks like the galloping "Other Script," the funky live sound of "Something Fresh" and the faster, slippery "The Mission" are unpredictable and highly addictive.... On the outer edges of the hip-hop fringe sits producer **Nobody** (né Elvin Estela). On *Soulmates* (Ubiquity), he runs through



ICE-T

a helping of moody, trip-hopish output, most of which is instrumental, but all of which you'll wish had an MC. He provides some lyrical salvation from the West Coast's finest underground talent: the legendary Freestyle Fellowship on the fast, space-freaked "Planets Ain't Aligned"; Medusa on the dusty groove of "Fiend Or The Fix"; and Abstract Rude lays back in the cut with the slow jazz slide of "Inner Eye." ... While most best-of compilations range from cash-ins to why-bothers, **Ice-T's** hand-picked *Greatest Hits: The Evidence* (Coroner-Atomic Pop) is an exception. Ice has always been overlooked for his contributions to the rap game, and this should set the record straight. From the early, Schoolly D-inspired, just-drum-and-vocal of "6 N' The Mornin'" to the gangster-tale twist of the recent "Money, Power, Women" (complete with obligatory Scarface samples), every phase of Ice's career is represented. If you've been taking Ice for granted all these years, now's your time to repent and be saved.



SPOOKS

NEWZ



INVISIBL SCRATCH PIZLZ

the group looks for another label.... Ninja Tune turns 10 years old this September, and to celebrate, the label will release *Xen Cats*, a three-CD, six-LP compilation featuring hits, outtakes and live recordings by Blackalicious, Herbaliser, DJ Vadim, Infesticons, Saul Williams, DJ Food and Roots Manuva, among a hell of a lot more. Check out www.ninjatune.net.

If you haven't already heard, San Francisco's godlike **Invisibl Scratch Pizlz** have called it quits. Their last performance as a group (for the near future, at least) was at Scratchcon 2000 on July 1 in San Francisco. Spokesperson Yoga Frog states in an official release: "We have many more reinventions of ourselves and projects to come.... In the signings and unsignings department: Oakland's **The Coup** are now signed to 75 Ark, and New York's **Non Phixion** have parted ways (amicably, it seems) with Matador. Non P's long-awaited full-length, *The Future Is Now*, will be delayed now as

>>>Just how far can the idea of the remix

**PICK!**

retaining audible elements of the source material. Bastard Noise chops it up and loses some splinters in the process, condensing it to 47 seconds; Christoph De Babalon blots it into a reverberating funnel of subdued noise with the singer's voice dripping like cave juice from the top; Sinking Body obsesses over a drill-like drum fill and reorders the rest of the song around it. The really notable mixes, though, extend "Monkey's Uncle" more than six times over. Kid606 decides that its screams and stutters would make the perfect accompaniment for some high ricochet quotient drum 'n' bass; he smashes the Locust's track into a million shards, rolls it out and wraps his beats around the resulting bumpy mess like mosquito netting. And San Francisco's pulse-rock band I Am Spoonbender makes tiny loops from the original track and uses them as bricks for a monolithic, pounding drone that ends with a babbling cut-up of blood-raw phonemes.

>>>**Black Dice**'s earlier singles presented them as a promising, spastic hardcore band, but with their new untitled 10-inch (Troubleman Unlimited), they've gone way over the top. These two long songs—or are they 15 short songs?—sound at first listen like uncontrolled, epileptic spasms of flesh-ripping noise, with a singer who's being flayed by an expert torturer into giving up the secret words that have already been burned out of his skull. Listen again, though, and they turn out to be actual compositions, with tight unison riffs and pre-planned rhythms and everything. The one on the second side resolves into the sound of a badly malfunctioning machine for four minutes in its middle, then into a shred of ultra high-end feedback repeating like a twittering mechanical bird, before it turns into a self-disemboweling rocker. The

closest parallel is the earliest records by the Boredoms, but even they never got quite this feral and inhuman.

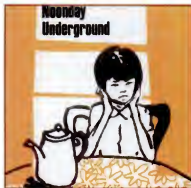


Portland's **Glass Candy And The Shattered Theatre** recorded their fabulous debut single, "Brittle Women" (Glass Candy) last year, but it sounds like a product of the D.I.Y. post-punk explosion, circa 1981: Ida Cross's urgent-but-obscured and deliberately mechanical singing, the handclaps and smashing-glass sound effects, M. Evan Burdun's half-discarded

drumming, the lyrics about "dark glamour" and cries of "Ashe! Ashe!" The B-side is a cover of David Bowie's "Hang On To Yourself" that pumps in two elbow piano solo, and cuts off before its novelty wears off.

The first solo record by bassist/singer Karla Schickele of Ida is "Not Here" (Tree), a sweet, mellow single recorded under the name **K.**, with a couple of other Ida members backing her up on violin and clarinet. There's a touch of classical art song in the way she sets her words to her piano parts, but she lingers over each syllable like a protective friend, making sure it's all right before she sees it off into the world. On the B-side, she nods to another bit of Ida's extended family with a cover of Low's "The Plan," letting it move as slowly and ponderously as a grandfather clock's pendulum.

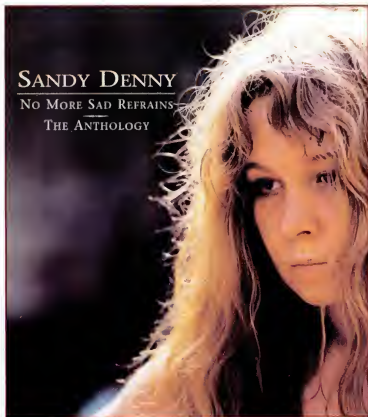
Simon Dine was a founding member of Adventures in Stereo, but he's been lying low for a few years. He's resurfaced with **Noonday Underground**, and the band's first single, "When You Leave" (Sonic Syrup) picks up where the early AIS stuff left off: It sounds like old soul and soundtrack records, disinterred in pieces, duplicated where necessary, and sewn back together almost artfully enough to leave no trace. But Dine's only half of the band: The other half is vocalist Daisy Martey, a soul shouter in the grand 60s tradition, whose fire-breathing Afro-in-the-garage yell turns "When You Leave" into a splendid Bride-Of-Frankenstein casino funk record.

**A FEW QUICK DROPS OF THE NEEDLE**

"Houdini," the final single by the Northwest drone-rock band **Jessamine** (on Histronic), is possibly the most cleverly packaged 7-inch ever. It's sealed shut with a little padlock, and the key is concealed inside the package, get it? And the music? Well, um, (cough)... Occasional Magnetic Fields singer L.D. Beghtol's band **Flare** gets a hand from the Fields' Stephin Merritt on

their 7-inch remix of "Celebrate The Misery" (Mother West): Merritt slows the original song's instruments to a life-flashing-before-your-eyes blur, Beghtol croons the title like he sort of half means it, and it's punctuated by deeply un-festive sleigh bells. The flip, "Another Bridge," is even more crepuscular.... The ubiquitous **Kid606**'s reworking of "Straight Outta Compton," reviewed here a couple of months ago, has turned up in an American version on his own Tigerbat6 label—as a 3-inch CD single, "Attitude," with 14 other very brief N.W.A. covers, remixes and "tributes" by various electronic luminaries. Highlights include Team Doyobi getting a speech-synthesis program to perform "Fuck Tha Police," Electric Company's cyborganic deconstruction "Xpressway To Yrself," and Matmos's word-by-word substitution collage "Great White Entertainers".... **IQU** only really have one new song on "Teenage Dream" (K)—an extended electro-beat fantasia on an old Japanese children's tune, given extra oomph by standup bass and a New Order-style guitar break—but they've turned it into a 50-minute disc with the help of eight remixers. L'exauculp's spottier, Autechre-influenced "Meek Remix" is the cleverest, though none is more fun than the original.





SANDY DENNY

NO MORE SAD REFRAINS

THE ANTHOLOGY

PICK!

>>>It's one of life's inscrutable mysteries:

Virtually everybody has a voice, but not everyone can sing. And even among those that can and do sing, very few are possessed of a vocal quality of such haunting timbre and quality that they can virtually intoxicate listeners. British folk-rock phenom **Sandy Denny** had such an instrument at her disposal, and given a good song—especially certain sombre tunes about uncaring Richard Thompson-esque rogue characters—her lilting, sad-sounding soprano could have a truly mesmerizing effect. Denny hovered in the same British folk-rock circles as Thompson and Nick Drake, performing solo and as a featured vocalist for Fairport Convention, before her untimely death after falling down a flight of stairs in 1978. Many Americans were introduced to Denny's voice through her haunting counterpoint vocals on Led Zeppelin's "Battle Of Evermore," amidst the black-light posters and joss sticks of the day. But steadily over the years, her legend and posthumous fame have grown and her cult audience has continued to expand. For newcomers, Universal's new *No More Sad Refrains: An Anthology* is a wonderful introduction, and a 1977 live recording (*Gold Dust*, on Island) released several years ago is also highly recommended.

>>>Columbia Legacy has just released the two-CD *Anthology* by fusion guitarist **Al Di Meola**, whose blend of blazing leads and smooth chord work epitomized '70s fusion. DiMeola also came up with one of the coolest instrumental song titles ever, "Race With The Devil On Spanish Highway," the perfect description of his own guitar pyrotechnics. One can just picture the bearded and bespectacled Al, scarf blowing, brakes screeching, frantically turning and shifting through curves in a Lamborghini while Satan menacingly tails him in a lipstick-red Ferrari Dino.... Two ultra-important **Jeff Beck** albums, 1968's *Truth* and 1969's *Beck-Ola*, have just been re-released by Epic. Intriguingly, a young Rod Stewart sang vocals for the Jeff Beck Group before joining the Faces. Given how close the albums were to the founding of super-group Led Zeppelin, it's interesting that Beck's fellow Yardbird Jimmy Page would

up using many of the same ideas—strutting cocksure vocalist, bombastic drummer, wailing guitar leads and "heavy" treatments of recycled blues themes—that Beck was exploring.... One of the more fascinating pockets of music history is the nebulous pre-punk world of the early to mid-1970s. It's amazing to sift through the evidence and find out who was slumming around New York's Alphabet City or passing out under the tables at L.A.'s Whiskey Bar back in the days before punk rock, when CBGB was an actual bluegrass club. Venerated indie label ROIR has just released *Lipstick Killers: The Mercer Street Sessions*, which features 1972 recordings by the **New York Dolls**. The sessions won't win any awards from audiophile magazines, but they're full of kick and scrap—and if you turn the volume up loud enough, fidelity is no longer an issue.... Back in the sweat-soaked '70s, **Canned Heat** was the world's heaviest white-boy blues band; purveyors of the rhythmically intense, melodically minimalist genre known as "boogie." The German label Ruf has just released *The Boogie House Tapes*, a two-CD collection of live recordings, unreleased studio sessions and in-studio FM radio broadcasts. Again, the fidelity is questionable, but if you just want to crank up some lease-breakin', full-tilt boogie music, it'll have you smashing chairs to the beat in no time.... If you're looking for something that will astound your party guests, you can't do much better than **King Bennie Nawahi's** *Hawaiian String Virtuoso* on the redoubtable indie label Yazoo. Nawahi was the king of the Hawaiian steel guitar in the roaring '20s, and his novelty records featured feistily strummed ukeleles, swooning steel guitars, and bizarre native chants sung by barbershop quartets. It sounds like something out of one of those surreal old-timey cartoons where the "G-man" cat sheriff has a shoot-out with a gang of whiskey-bootlegging mice, or where a slice of cake with a Betty Boop face dances and sings a song about dimples. The label's also released a companion compilation for the hardcore Hawaiian music buffs who wish to explore further.

NEWS



While not nearly as big in terms of numbers, any time you talk about records that will not die—like Pink Floyd's *Dark Side Of The Moon* or the Eagles' *Hotel California*—the **Rocky Horror Picture Show** is certainly in the same company. The soundtrack is back again in a deluxe edition from Rhino, which will no doubt spark another wave of midnight-movie

mayhem.... Record producer Joel Dorn (who worked with Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Eddie Harris and the Neville Brothers) has set up a new label, M Records, to release archival live recordings and "lost" sessions from jazz and blues artists he's discovered over the years. The digital revolution continues to bear fruit, as non-professional tapes that would have been too gritty in the days of vinyl can now be presented in pristine condition. Look for loads of new titles from the label in the coming months.... It's not music, but Rhino is also releasing **Crash! Boom! The Best Of Warner Brothers Sound FX**, a CD compiling all the wacky sounds associated with your favorite Looney Tunes double-takes and cartoon yuks. This is definitely one to use on your answering machine—or better yet, to replace the dinky "error message" sounds on your computer with something like the sound of Wile E. Coyote being hurled into a cliff by a gigantic Acme rubber band.

AUGUST 29

DAVID ARKENSTONE *Caravan Of Light* **Narada.**
CHRIS BOWEN *Beautiful Nasty* **Ninja Tune.**

THE COMPANY BEC.
CARL CRAIG *Designer Music: The Removes Volume 1* **Planet E.**

CHEAP TRICK *The Authorized Greatest Hits* **Epic**
Legacy.

DO OR DIE *Victory* **Virgin.**
DLA DOWNS *True Life* **Narada** **Tone.**

DULCES VITES **NCA.**
FUCKENOS *Airway* **Man's Ruin.**

WARREN HILL *Live Life* **Narada Jazz.**
FLACIO JIMENEZ *Sneytown* **Back Porch.**

JOHN WESLEY HARDING *The Confessions Of S. Ace* **Mammoth.**

HELLSTOMPER *Hillbilly Motherfucker* **Man's Ruin.**
JETS TO BRITZ *Four Corned Night* **Jade Tree.**

JULIANA THEORY *Emotion Is Dead* **Both And Nail**
LOVERBOT *Live, Love, Lose* **Columbia Legacy.**

Four years of live Loverbot on one CD.
OSCAR LOPEZ *Amorando* **Fire** **Narada** **Tone.**

MAN OF THE FUTURE *The Future Is Not Now* **Lovesick.**
JOHN MCUSKER *Nitea House* **Angels.**

WILLIE NELSON *Milk Out One Blues* **Island.**
THE NEW RISING SONS *Thieves And Angels* **Virgin.**

THE PIERCES **550.**
PUGDOG **NCA.**

SONS OF OTIS *SuperJumboFudge* **Man's Ruin.**
SPACANAPOLI *Lost Souls* **RealWorld** **Tone.**

THREE *Root* **A Sign Of Things to Come** **Solid State.**
TRUDY THOMPSON *Trudy Thompson* **Virgin.**

Third Liquid-Industry.
TRISTAN PSIONIC *Mind The Gap* **Sonic Union.**

UP BUSTLE & LOUD *Los Locos Cubanos* **Ninja Tune.**
Live.

VARIOUS ARTISTS *Unlone Sampler 1* **Nine Sounds** **Nice Noise** **Unlone.**

Classical, jazz and world music from Madonna collaborator Patrick Levanova's new label.

WILSON VASQUEZ *Live At Ninja* **Virgin.**
HANK WILLIAMS JR. *The Bocephus Box* **Curb.**

Three CDs of hot country goodness, including "Outlaw Women," "Blas Women," "Briety Sex Women," "I Really Love You" and "Haired Women And Bees."

WISDOM OF HARRY *House Of Henry* **Matador.**

SEPTEMBER 5

THE 6THS *Hyacinths & Thistles* **Merge.**
RYAN ADAMS *Heartbreaker* **Bloodshot.**

The first solo effort from Whitesnake's frontman. Dylan thinks he's superdramatic.

Split EP.
AMN BENNIN *Nerve Nests* **Atavistic-Unheard Music Series.**

THE BLACK HEART PROCESSION *Three* **Touch And Go.**
BOBBY CONN *Singledie #1* **Thrill Jockey.**

LEO CUBAN'S *Heavy Days Are Here Again* **Atavistic-Unheard Music Series.**

OMNIPERSONAL/LOVE LIGHT SHINE **Big Wheel** **Recreation.**

Split EP.
DAMON & NAOMI *Damon & Naomi With Ghost Sub **Box.***

ORUNS AND TUBA *Box Artwork: The Flying Ballerina* **My Girl Co.**

Reissues with new artwork and bonus tracks.
ELEVENTH DREAM O'AY *The Stalled Parade* **Thrill Jockey.**

Split EP.
FLUET *Centrifuge* **Start Your Engines **Daghouse.****

FRIENDS OF SOUND *Rock-Ola* **Hidden Agents.**

ALASTAIR GALTBRATH *Cry* **Empire Jungs.**

THE IN OUT *A Living Memorial* **Deutschland** **Dun.**

Split EP.
THE INSMOUCS *Get Something Going* **Extrix.**

BOB JAMES **Warner Bros.**

JEJUNE RIP **Big Wheel Recreation.**

The very last release ever from these emo-pop superstars.

JIM AND JENNIE AND THE PINKETOPS *Little Bicy* **Overcoat.**

JIMMY EAT WORLD/BEZODIAH *Big Wheel Recreation.*

Split EP and 10-inch.

JOSE *Unleash the Great* **Quest-Narada** **Tone.**

LAJOY *Red* **Reprise.**

LADYTRON *Commodore Rock* **Empire Norton.**

Split EP.
THE LASSIE FOUNDATION *Pacifico* **Grand Theft** **Autumn.**

Reissue.
THE LULL ACCOUNT *0001* **Grand Theft Autumn.**

Live. To Watch. The Natch'l Blues. The Real Thing **Columbia Legacy.**

Expanded reissues.
MAJOR LANCE *The Very Best Of Major Lance* **Epic** **Legacy.**

Expanded reissues.

MAN OR ASTRO-MAN? *Spectrum Of Infinite Scale* **Touch & Go.**

MOJAVE *Excuse For Travelers* **4AD.**
THE MOONIE SUZUKI *People Get Ready* **Extros.**

Mos Def. Ms. Fat Booty **Vol. 2** **Rawkus.**
Live.

NACHTLUFT *Bella-Vue I-V* **Atavistic-Unheard Music** **Tone.**

NILE *Black Seeds Of Vengeance* **Relapse.**
"I bet you didn't know Black Seeds Of Vengeance was the working title of W. Sync's No Strings Attached."

PHOMING EXCUSE *Hoppy Nap Casino* **Dad Beloved** **Cloud-N-Guns.**

PINETOP *Seven* **Bringing Home The Last Great Strike** **Atavistic-Tuckstop.**

PRISM *Museum Of Imaginary Animals* **Merge.**
RED STARS *Thriller* **Touch And Go.**

4-song EP.
THE SCIENCE OF CRISIS *TicWar, Amation, Cattle* **Docap** **To-Do** **No.**

Split EP.
ST. CHRISTOPHER *Golden Blue* **Parasol.**

BETTIE SEEVERE *Private Soul* **Hidden Agenda** **SUNSHINE FIX** *A Future History Of A Sunshine Fix* **Anderscore.**

Split EP.
TRANS AM *Red Line* **Thrill Jockey.**

UD VAOIM *Your Revolution/The Standard Bears* **Ninja** **Tone.**

Live.
JACI VELASQUEZ *Crystal Clear* **Word-Epic.**

SEPTEMBER 11

A GUY CALLED GERALD *Fever* **Studio 7K.**
Live.

SLIM CESSNA'S AUTO CLUB *Always Say Please And Thank You* **Alternative** **Reckless.**

NONSENSE *Nononsense* **Alternative** **Reckless.**

SEPTEMBER 12

16 HORSEPOWER *Secret South* **Razor & Tie.**
Live.

AT THE DRIVE-IN *Relationship Of Command* **Grand** **Royal.**

BARNABES *Los Angeles* **Compan** **Reprise.**

BERNARDI BLUES *Rock-A-Fella* **BURNING BONES *Escape* **Victory.****

REGINA CARTER **Verve.**
CHILL OUTS *Orchestra* **Hi.**

EDDY CLEARWATER *Reservation Blues* **Burlesque** **Blues & Jazz.**

HARVEY GARDNER *King James Version* **London.**
Split EP.

GO LOUIE **MCA.**
FAITH & DISEASE **Projekt.**

FINE CHINA *When The World Sings* **Both And Nail.**
FUTURE LOOP FOUNDATION *The Middle Of Nowhere* **Liquid.**

ARMANDO GARZÓN *Escándalo* **Corason.**
THE GUN & DOLL SHOW *New Blood* **Fortune.**

THE HIVES *Ven, Vid, Vicinus* **Burning Heart.**
FRANK PRICKE *Live At Billy Bob's* **Razor And Tie.**

RIKIE LEE JONES *It's Like This* **Artemis.**
TOM JONES *Reinad* **VE.**

Reissue.
J.P. ANNARDINE AND DANIELLE FRIDLEY *Wild Rose Of The Mountains* **Easten** **Piedmont Music.**

Reissue.
KEVINIAN DEATH CYCLE *Collection For Injection* **Metropolis.**

LOS AMIGOS INVISIBLES *Amiga 3000* **Luaka Bop.**

THE MARSHMALLOW COAST *Marshmallow* **Coasting** **Reckless.**

Split EP.
MARVELOUS 3 *Reayden* **Elektra.**

CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE *Band* **So-Fi** **Verve.**

BIG JAY MCNEELY *Central Avenue Confidential* **Atlantic** **Tone.**

Reissue.
MEDUVAL BEBES *Underline* **Network.**

THE MR. T EXPERIENCE *The Miracle Of Shame* **London.**

NEW FOUND GLORY **MCA.**

ROBERT NIGHTHAWK *Live On Maxwell Street* **Deluxe** **Edition** **Nights** **Blues & Jazz.**

ELKADIS *Rock* **Quinto **La Cuarteto Pasa** **Higher** **Octave World.****

MARIA OCHOA *Asi Inebria* **Blue Jacket!**

COURTNEY PINE *Back In The Day* **Blue Truck.**

KAREN RAMIREZ **MCA.**

RESCUATCH *Come Out* **Zig Zag.**

SALIVA **Live.**

MOHAMMAD REZA SHAHRIARIAN & KAYHAN KALHORI *Night Silence* *Defend* **Traditional** **Crossroads** **SHUTDOWN** *How Far And Far Between* **Victory.**

SMUT PEODOLERS *That's Smut* **Decimated** **Minutes** **Touch & Go.**

Live.
THE SMOKE *We're about to become smut peddlers with our* **issue of CMJ** **Nude Music Monthly** **coming soon to newstands** **near you.**

THE SOFTIES *Holiday In Rhode Island* **K.**
SOUL ASYLUM *Black Road* **The Best Of Soul Asylum** **Virgin.**

SOULFLY *Primitive* **Roots.**

SPEEDELER *Heres Comes Death* **Palm.**

Reissue.
D SP00KY *Haunted Breaks Volume 3* **Liquid Sky** **Stew** **Ghost** **The Telegraph** **Company.**

TABLA BETA SCIENCE *Tala Matrix* **Palm.**

UD TESTO *Summer Breeze* **Network.**
TOM TOM CLUB *The Good The Bad And The Funky* **Hykoid.**

Pro. They used to be in the Talking Heads. Con. They once wrote a song called "Wordy Rappin'ood."

Live.
TWILIGHT SINGERS *Twilight As Played By The Twilight* **Singers** **Columbia.**

Side project of Afghan Whigs frontman Greg Dulli.
UNDERWORLD *Everything* **Everything** **VE.**

Live.
UNION 13 *Unite* **Unite **The Awakening **Epitaph** **Various Artists** *Jack Ruby Presents The Black*** **Foundation** **Heartless.****

The Black & Whites of me from Burning Spear, The Heptones, The 13 Tracks and more.

VARIOUS ARTISTS *Black Foundation In Dub* **Heartless.**

Live.
WAST *Music For People* **Elektra.**

WIBROLUSH *Touch And Go* **VE.**

VITAL INFORMATION *Live Around The World* **Inhibition.**
DOODOO GLOW SKULLS *Symbiotic* **Epitaph** **KEITH VITALITY** *Sad Songs And Waffles* **Rawdour.**

WOLF COLONEL *The Castle* **K.**

SEPTEMBER 19

AMBER *Remixed* **Tommy Boy.**

NATASHA ALTA *Dance Remixed* **Mantra.**
BLACK LEAGUE *Ichor* **Nuclear Blast.**

BURKS *Seminar* **Elektra.**
The soundtrack to the film Dancer In The Dark, which includes "I've Seen It All," a duet with Radiohead's Thom

Yorke.
BLUE MEANIES *The Post Wave* **MCA.**

CASPAR BROTTMANN *Music Massacre* **Thirty-Ex.**
CAPONE N NORDEGA *The Reunion* **Tommy Boy.**

DICE RAIN *Reclaiming The Dead* **MCA.**
DOWN HIPPERCASE *Matching Moolah* **Double** **Capricorn.**

EGOR *The One And Only High And Low* **Digital** **Harvest.**

FIELD MOW **MCA.**
FREIGHT ELEVATOR QUARTET *Becoming Transparent* **Capricorn.**

FLIP **550.**
GOLDPAPP *Felt Mountain* **MCA.**

GOOD CHARLOTTE *Good Charlotte* **Epic.**
GOODING **3x** **53.**

REX HOBART & THE MISERY BOYS *The Spectacular Sadness Of Rex Hobart & The Misery Boys* **Bloodshot.**

THE INSMOUCS **Conc.**
THE ISLEY BROTHERS *The Ultimate Isley Brothers* **Epic** **Legacy.**

Reissue.
T.D. JAMES *Get Ready For The Best Of T.D. James* **Word.**

JOAN OF ARC *The Gap* **Jade Tree.**
OMEN JURADO *Ghost Of David* **Sub Pop.**

KEP **MP** **550.**

PATTI LABELLE *When A Woman Loves A Man* **MCA.**

MADONNA *Music* **Maverick.**

Madonna returns with her most innovative album title yet!

MAT MANIER *Quarter* **Blue Deuce** **Thirty-Ex.**

MIKE O *Sugar Sheds* **Salt Tru Broadcasting.**

NET ROYALE **MCA.**

NEUTRAL *Port Translation Errors* **Mad Monkey** **No.**

Live.
NEO *Age Sounds* **Max** **Wax.**

PAL OAKENFOLD *Perfect Presents* **Another World** **London.**

ONILLO PEREZ *Mothersland* **Verve.**

PHONIX *Under* **Source-Adriatic.**

PROTEK *Suns* **Science-Adriatic.**

RASO *Guns Still Hot* **Pockets **Unite** **No.****

Live.
SWEET MONEY IN THE ROCK *Still The Same* **Me** **Rounder** **Kids.**

TELA *The World Ain't Enuff* **Virgin.**

AMON TOBIN *4-Ton Tams* **Ninja** **Tone.**

SIMON FISHER TURNER *Travelcard* **Suffor.**

TOU *Academics* **Mute.**

VARIOUS ARTISTS *Alan Lomax Collection: Caribbean* **Voyage** **Rounder.**

Field recordings documenting the music of the island of

Cuba.
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Xen Cuts* **Ninja Tune.**

Three CDs, four LP sets with tracks from Ninja Tune's

greatest names, including Amon Tobin, Kid Koala, Coldcut,

and more.
KIRK WHALUM **Warner Bros.**

SEPTEMBER 20

JOHN COLTRANE *Joe Coltrane: Plays The Blues* **Rhino.**
Reissues.

SEPTEMBER 25

GARDENIAN *Sundries* **Nuclear Blast.**
TATOS DE PARAO *Sistemas Delo Cruza* **Alternative** **Tenets.**

VARIOUS ARTISTS *Songs From The Penalty Box* **Nine** **Point** **Wass & More.**

Features tracks from Ghoti Hawk, Calabrito 13, Velocity

and more.

SEPTEMBER 26

12 VOLT *SEX* **RCA.</**

Is That Your Vinyl Answer?



STORY: STUART BERMAN PHOTOS: RUSSELL MONK

**SEMI-
REFORMED
RECORD
COLLECTOR
ALAN ZWEIG
LOOKS INTO
THE HOT WAX
HEART OF
DARKNESS.**

At times, it seems like *they're* the ones who own your apartment. Your girlfriend keeps pleading with you to make them go away. Just when you think you have the problem under control, their infestation increases exponentially. And while you could crush these shiny, black terrors with your foot, that's only a temporary solution.

No, we're not talking about cockroaches here, but something far more insidious: records. Alan Zweig painstakingly captures the struggle of record addiction in his bittersweet documentary *Vinyl*. The Toronto-based filmmaker fixes his lone camera on obsessive vinyl scavengers and (with the help of his bathroom mirror) himself, openly questioning if amassing and cataloging plastic has less to do with a love for music than with filling the void in an empty life.

Coming off like Gilbert Gottfried's more dour and frazzled older brother, Zweig laconically coaxes his subjects into revealing the disturbing effects of their obsession and the nastier side of their personalities.



Vinyl is as much an unsettling portrait of hitting emotional rock-bottom as it is a document of a kitschy phenomenon.

The *Vinyl* parade features everyone from gonzo Elvis freaks to an irritable hypochondriac who needs 10 minutes to clear the mountains of records separating his bedroom and bathroom, and the interviews make it painfully clear that an addiction to bargain-bin pillaging can be as much a hindrance to a healthy, active lifestyle as heroin.

"My argument in the film is, 'It's not the music,' I don't think there is such a thing as just 'music.' You like record covers, a certain iconography, a certain kind of print," says the bear-like Zweig as he flips through the new-arrivals bin at Neurotica, the Toronto used-record shop where he worked for four years.

The scene is not unlike watching a recovering addict returning to his former crackhouse. The narrow rows lure vinyl-hoarding introverts from all over Toronto to the hip Queen Street strip. Esoteric like *Snack Bar Music* or *Henri Renais's Music For The Weaker Sex* papers every inch of the walls. If you're not banging your knees against decrepit, dust-covered boxes of vinyl, you're in the way of someone who wants to be.

For Zweig, the filming of *Vinyl* served as a cinematic 12-step program out of a downhill spiral greased with every god-awful '60s easy-listening record he could find. The filmmaker has since sold off a fair chunk of his collection to Neurotica—and scouring past previously owned relics like *The Electronic Harmonica* ("I was hoping it would be more electronic, but it was just sort of amplified") doesn't make Zweig the least bit antsy.

"I would go through a bin like this," he explains, rifling past a batch of Black Sabbath albums, "and as long as just the very lettering is in a 'rock' font, I'd just sort of go 'yeah, yeah, yeah,' and not even really look. But then you see that"—he holds up a copy of *Cab Calloway At The Cotton Club*—"and you just stop! There's half-naked girls on the cover and you go, 'What is that? And if it's 50 cents, it doesn't matter what it is, you buy it every time because you think, 'I'm never going to see it again.'"

That mindstate is why *Vinyl* turns out to be as much an unsettling portrait of Zweig hitting emotional rock-bottom as a document of a kitschy phenomenon. Although Zweig claims he lived "a life of leisure" during the four years of filming (he only spent \$10,000 of his \$50,000 government arts grant to cover production costs), on camera, he's a

wreck. Zweig is brutally candid about his feelings of emptiness and his bleak prospects for marriage and fatherhood. He also realizes that the one thing he truly loved—an original vinyl copy of Curtis Mayfield's *There's No Place Like America Today*—he sold years ago in favor of the cruddy CD version.

The upside of bottoming out is that you stop giving a fuck. Zweig's fearlessly carefree approach—appearing at his subjects' doorsteps mere moments after contacting them—and nothing-to-lose line of questioning results in alternately absurd and downright tense confrontations: A congenial classical music collector turns aggressively defensive when Zweig needles him about being a grown man living with his mother; a rabid vinyl hound with a psycho-killer stare demands that Zweig test his photographic memory of K-tel compilation track listings, as if the two were locked in a game of Russian roulette; and in the film's most sublime moment, a cantankerous country-music collector lashes out at the ex-wife who seized his records in the divorce settlement—only for Zweig to sheepishly ask where the woman sold off the records, so that maybe he could get his hands on the man's ultra-rare copy of the Louvin Brothers' *Satan Is Real*.

Tim Powis, a Toronto-based music journalist and Bravo! Television producer who's featured in the film, figures, "The reason Alan could get away with showing people in such an unflattering light is that he himself is a victim of what he's documenting." (How does Powis feel that his *Vinyl* appearance is limited to 15 seconds? "Alan told me, 'Some people are featured more in the film, and be glad you're not one of them.'")

Powis, a happily married father of three, nonetheless epitomizes *Vinyl's* *raison d'être* when he asks on camera: "Doesn't everyone have 30 John Coltrane albums?"

It's the sort of guiding philosophy that has led some to dub Zweig's film "*High Fidelity* verité." And while Zweig is concerned about accusations of bandwagon-jumping, he acknowledges *Vinyl's* sold-out Toronto premiere at last May's Hot Docs festival benefited from some Hornby/Cusack-inspired music-geek chic.

"I would say our ideas are similar in that I love stories about record collecting," Zweig admits, "but what we concentrate on is different. Sometimes I wish *Vinyl* was as facile as *High Fidelity*—the whole thing in *Vinyl* of me talking about having kids, I was afraid that would just totally narrow the interest.... Because it has that stuff, it isn't just a 'cool' trend thing.... maybe it will have an appeal beyond the cool-for-five-minutes thing." (Though the film has yet to secure him a distribution deal in the US or Canada, it will have its American premier at the New York CMJ FilmFest.)

Still, *Vinyl* and *Fidelity* share something rather significant: a happy ending where the music geek gets the girl. Zweig is happily involved with a "psychotically neat" girlfriend, and more importantly, he's curbed his vinyl habit from religiously plundering thrift stores and garage sales to the occasional used-record store visit.

"A friend of mine put it this way," he says: "You could buy 20 records for 10 bucks, and a year from now you're not going to have any of them left because the most that happened was that some of them were better than the crap you thought they might be. Or you could take 10 bucks and buy that Captain Beefheart record you've always wanted and you'll know you'll keep it because it's great. So I've come to accept that logic...up to a point."

NMM



No matter what Elvis says, Isaiah Jackson, trombonist with Chicago jazz outfit 8 Bold Souls, knows first hand that jailhouses don't rock. After 16 years as a corrections officer at Chicago's Cook County Jail—the largest single-location jail on the planet—Jackson has no illusions about any cell block starting to swing. Instead, he uses music to unwind after he punches out. "Working at the jail takes so much of your creative juices away that when you get off, you really don't have the energy to do anything. You have to use something else to give you that back." Suitably, the mind-expanding sounds of the act's latest album, *Last Option* (their first for Chicago indie Thrill Jockey), are a

far cry from the spirit-endangering confines of your average lock-up. The band uses woodwinds, cello, brass, bass and drums to build attention-

"You're using everything you can to create on one level and everything else on the other level not to get involved."

getting tunes ranging from hop to avant-garde. For Jackson, jazz and work are "like night and day: You're using everything you can to create on one level and you're using everything else on the other level not to get involved." Still, he finds the dichotomy useful. "The music balances it out where I can ease a lot of the stress off without taking it out on people, and try to challenge myself to use adversity to make myself stronger." He pauses, considering. "Cause if it doesn't kill you, it makes you stronger." —Mikael Wood

EVERY DAY IS HALLOWEEN

PHOTOS: CHARLIE LANGELLA STYLING: DINA FRAGALE MAKEUP: DEBORAH GRAYSON

Everyone wants to be a rock 'n' roll star, but who wants to bother learning how to play an instrument, touring or doing interviews? Let's face it, the look is what the groupies go for, not the talent—just look at the top 40. So, here are four ensembles that will make you a Halloween hottie. And if you absolutely insist on being a rock star, rest assured—getting the image down is the hardest part.

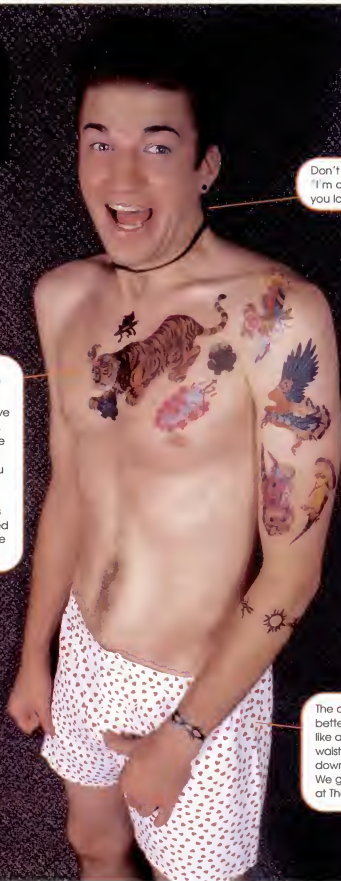
BLINK-182

For those who need a last-minute costume, just a few tattoos and Underoos (or boxer shorts as the case may be) are all that's needed to recreate the look of obnoxious, yet endearing, corporate punk rock.

Good fake tattoos range in price from about \$2 to \$5, so if you want to cover a decent portion of your chest you'll have to drop, uh...you do the math. Hint: Fake tattoos don't adhere well to hair, so if fur is an issue, be prepared with the Noir (you know what I'm sayin'?). Make sure you flout your "indie" status by giving props to lobels and artists with more street cred than you (notice the Ninja Tune ninjo tattoo).

Don't forget the smirk that says "I'm a loud-mouthed prick, and you love it!"

The cuter the boxer shorts, the better. Because you might look like an insensitive dork from the waist up, but from the waist down you still want to be cuddly. We got this heart-covered pair at The Sock Mon.



OL' DIRTY BASTARD

Sometimes being down just ain't enough—you've got to be way, way down. And when you are, the look that screams, "N****A PLEASE!" is the way to go.

For that Big Baby Jesus halo, you'll want to get your Rick James Jheri Curl on or purchase a "Supertreak" wig to do it for you. This one ran about \$40, but those who want that "You Don't Want To F**k With Me" look should be willing to pony up.

Call around to costume shops for the fake gold teeth (these cost \$12). To keep them stuck on good, swipe some of grandma's Polident (no, really). Of course, if you want to really get into character, you can get all of your teeth capped for several thousand dollars more.

You'll need a stipple sponge (or a Brillo pad) and black eye shadow (we used MAC) to create that "Dirt Dog" facial overgrowth. Simply dab the sponge into the eye shadow and do the same on your grill.

Of course, the full-body glitter suit is the "Got Your Money" *pièce de résistance*. We got these muthafuckin' Buck Rodgers threads at New York's Halloween Adventure Shop (212-673-4546), but you can always mug one of the horn players from Earth, Wind & Fire.

BRITNEY SPEARS

For those who have a bellybutton and know how to work it, here's the costume that will have your friends groaning. "Oops...You Did It Again."

Tommy Hilfiger made the white shirt with silver rhinestones. With any luck, you can get him to sponsor your get-up. The red sports bra is Adidas (ask Charmin's Mr. Whipple for hints about getting the shape right).

Red and black-checked schoolgirl skirt by Tripp. It's a personal choice if you want to shave anything near or under that skirt, but a little electrolysis only hurts for a second.

Black Converse sneakers available at fine stores everywhere.

To get the ultra-smooth "Baby, One More Time" complexion, you'll want full-coverage foundation (we used MAC, and lots of it). Lipgloss by Revlon, mascara by Lancome, Mattese eye shadow and Warm Glow rouge...nauseating come-hither expression, your own. The blonde bob wig completes that Lolita The Mouseketeer look.

INSANE CLOWN POSSE

First, decide which one of the Amazing Jeckel Brothers you want to be and then get a whole mess of face paint. Using a flat, soft brush, paint the entire face white (we used Ben Nye's Clown White makeup). Then, paying attention to symmetry, draw outlines with black pencil eye liner and fill the spaces using black cream makeup (Ben Nye's also works well for this).

Depending on which ICP era you're going for, you can bleach your hair blonde or get a wig. We went ol' school with the locks. The jester hat and rasta imposta wig are both available at New York's Halloween Adventure Shop.

Just because it's a costume doesn't mean you should clown on the clothes. The silver and orange jacket is from Triple Five Soul.

White cotton gloves are available at bridal shops (don't ask how we know that).

SPITKICKER 07.18.2000 NYC

PHOTOS: KERI-ANN LAURITO



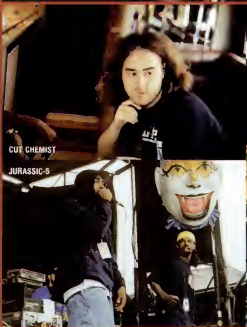
PHAROAH MONCH



COMMON

WARPED 07.24.2000 NYC

PHOTOS: MATT ELLER, BOSSTONES; WILL HAWKINS



CUTE CHEMIST
JURASSIC-5



NOFX

TATTOO THE EARTH 07.22.2000
BOSTON, MA

PHOTOS: WILL HAWKINS



NASHVILLE PUSSEY



MUDVAYNE



SLAYER

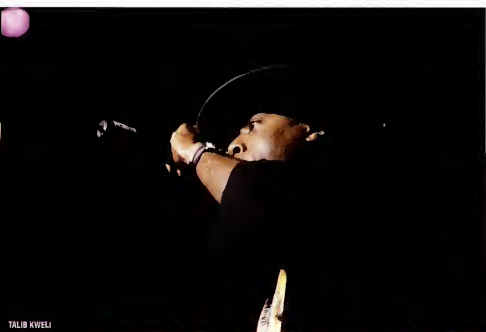
BIZ MARKIE



ERYKAH BADU



TALIB KWELI



LONG BEACH DUB ALLSTARS



RAS-I AND FAT MIKE TRY
TO GET THEIR GROOVE ON



MOSH PIT



DICKY BARRETT OF THE MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES



head(p)



LADON OF SEVENDUST



PACK FOR THE OUTBACK

FOOD TOOL

Whether you're camping in the mountains or negotiating your own kitchen, don't bother wasting cash on a series of expensive utensils. With the Food Tool, you've got just about everything you'll need to eat a meal in one convenient contraption. It comes complete with corkscrew, knife, bottle opener and salt and pepper shakers. As for the fork...you're on your own, champ. (Zeeco, \$30, www.zeeco.com)

LONG REACH FLEXIBLE FLASHLIGHT

You can use this baby at home to search for enough change under the couch to buy a Happy Meal, or to illuminate whatever Blair Witch movie that growling noise outside your tent. Go from floodlight to spot beam with a simple twist. Best of all, the tube wraps around the case for easy storage in your pocket. Also included is a snap-on red lens for roadside emergencies. Did we mention it's waterproof? (\$14.95, www.zeeco.com)

EMARKER

You might not use this on a camping trip, but it's still pretty damn cool for those of us who never stick with one radio station long enough to hear the name of that new song we like. This handy gizmo enables you to bookmark tunes from the radio in order to find song titles. How does it work? You buy the eMarker, register at the Web site and select the local radio stations you listen to most often. When a new song you like comes on the radio, you press the eMarker button. Then connect the device to your PC through the USB port and time information is uploaded and matched to a database at eMarker.com, which contains information on song titles, artists and links to music retailers on the Web. The best part: no more humming obscure pop songs to annoyed record-store clerks. (For more info, check out www.sony.com)

MIRACLE BREWZER

When it comes to brewing beer, the Brits know their way around a pint, which is why this is simply the best beer machine on the market today (aside from the fact that it looks like the bastard son of R2D2). And if you're planning on an extended stay in a cabin out in the middle of nowhere (think Ted Kaczynski), you're going to need this device. To boot, the BrewZer is user-friendly: Just add water to the pre-packaged Miracle Powder and in two weeks you're ready to start pounding serious lager. We recommend getting more than one—then come up short during hunting season. (Just under \$50, www.miracle-beer.com)



MULTI-PLIER 600 DELUXE BY GERBER

Standard-issue here at *CMJ New Music Monthly* for navigating the urban jungle, the Multi-Plier Deluxe model enables the use of any 1/4-inch hex bit on the market, which is important to anyone who's ever had the pleasure of attempting a repair on a broken-down late-model Plymouth in the middle of a downpour with little more than a crescent wrench and a roll of duct tape. It also includes a pair of Fiskars scissors which cut right through ballistic cloth, leather, braided fishing lines, and of course skin—so watch yourself: Them blades be sharp. You can choose the contents of your own multi-tool for optimal functionality. (Base price \$80.00, www.gerberblades.com)

MOTOROLA TALKABOUT T900

You don't have to be a purist when it comes to roughing it in the middle of the woods, right? This compact device offers two-way messaging and WebLink Wireless technology, enabling you to send and receive e-mail. Sports, headlines and weather information are updated daily, and it also contains an address book for storing pager numbers, wireless addresses, cell phone numbers, etc. (up to 250 entries). Just flip open the lid (it's always on, so no booting is up necessary) to get the skinny on that Packers game you had money riding on. (\$179.95 plus varying service cost, www.weblinkwireless.com)





BANG-UP JOB

GIRLFIIGHT'S HARDEST HITS AREN'T ALWAYS IN THE RING.

Sure, there have been plenty of corny flicks about tough teenage girls who fight their way out of the ghetto, but *Girlfight* (Screen Gems), this year's Sundance hit, takes that notion literally and scores a knockout. A couple of years ago, Brooklyn-based writer-director Karyn Kusama followed an energetic female friend into boxing as a hobby and after enjoying the initial physical surge, inspiration appeared while sparring tentatively with a man.

"Hit me!" he demanded.

At that moment, she realized, "We're here to hurt each other. And I thought, what an incredible demonstration of love: 'I give you permission to hurt me.' It's basically the kind of permission we give partners in love." Sometimes, she says, it works out okay—sometimes not.

In *Girlfight*, Diana—frustrated by the shallow kids at her high school and a beleaguered dad who suggests she take up aerobics—slips into a Brooklyn boxing gym and proceeds to destroy the competition. That is, until the character, played by Michelle Rodriguez, has to fight her beau, and things get complicated.

Kusama watched a lot of '70s "verite naturalism films" and '40s melodramas in search of *Girlfight*'s tone. The grand choreography of *Raging Bull* was of little use to the 32-year-old. "I'm more interested in stories about nobodies, so I kind of count *On the Waterfront* as a boxing movie." The St. Louis native saw *Girlfight*'s boxing as "desperate and scrappy" like real amateur boxing, and New York City as claustrophobic and confining.

The key to the film was finding Rodriguez. Kusama tried an open casting call after auditioning scores of overfed actors who lacked the raw hunger she needed. That ravenous approach materialized in the form of a pent-up retail worker. "She was on her way to being laid off from Toys 'R' Us," recalls Kusama about Rodriguez, who came in from Jersey City to audition. "I guess she lied to a lot of people and said they had the Pokémon dolls and they didn't."

Kusama figures her ensuing work will be more unorthodox than *Girlfight* and probably more in line with the films of arty directors like Cassavetes, Visconti and Imamura. In short, she hopes this one sticks: "*Girlfight* is the only thing I'll ever do that could reach a lot of people, in a universal-themed kind of way.... It's weirdly old-fashioned." »»»Scott Timberg

NURSE BETTY

(USA Films)

This dark and oddly appealing comedy stars Renée Zellweger as a waitress who accidentally witnesses her shady husband's murder and goes on the lam with hit men Morgan Freeman and Chris Rock in pursuit.



Where does "Nurse Betty" factor in? The trauma causes Zellweger to believe she's a character on her favorite daytime soap who's in love with dashing doctor Greg Kinnear. Director Neil LaBute, known for acerbic works such as *In The Company Of Men*, is a surprising choice for such broad humor, but he ably maneuvers the movie's many mood swings, from a bloody execution to jokes about soap opera plots. »»»John Elsasser

STEAL THIS MOVIE!

(Lions Gate Films)

A bio-pic about Abbie Hoffman and his yippie posse promises plenty of self-congratulatory Boomer highinks—and anyone looking for that will be satisfied by the first third of this film. *Steal*

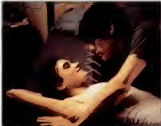


This Movie! takes those merry pranksters seriously indeed: Janeane Garofalo, who plays Hoffman's wife Anita, assures us gravely that "behind it all were serious ideas about the distribution of wealth." Thankfully, the film becomes less pretentious when Hoffman (Vincent D'Onofrio) goes underground to dodge the FBI; he's better as a wounded hero than a liberal saint. Though the movie was clearly made to please Hoffman's family and disciples, it panders no worse than Jim Carrey's take on Andy Kaufman. »»»Scott Timberg

REQUIEM FOR A DREAM

(Artisan)

Based on Hubert Selby, Jr.'s novel, *Requiem For A Dream* follows the frenzied narrative of two Coney Island junkies (Jared Leto and Marion Wayans) looking for the big score. Meanwhile,



Ellen Burstyn, brilliant as Leto's befuddled mother, battles her demons and addiction to diet pills. Juiced with a straight-to-hell gallop, writer-director Darren Aronofsky (of *Pi* renown) puts an invigorating twist on the tired drug-craze film genre. Bonus: Characters suffer wild withdrawal hallucinations that wouldn't seem out of place in *Valley Of The Dolls*. And we mean that as a compliment. »»»E.



Because even concerned hipsters have coffee tables, there's **When The Iron Bird Flies** (RSUB), an upscale Tibetan Freedom Concert scrapbook for downtown types that assembles Danny Clinch's serene backstage portraits of performers such as Beck, Porno For Pyros and Ben Harper striking the sensitive pose. Clinch's wide-frame, onstage action shots of Rage Against The Machine (left) and the Beastie Boys are more riveting, but elegance, for better or worse, outweighs explosiveness. Those who missed the first Tibetan Freedom Concert in San Francisco can now pick it up on the **Free Tibet** DVD (Palm Pictures), which features performances by A Tribe Called Quest, Björk, Pavement and almost every other '96 alt-rock notable. Relive those last few golden years before insensitive mooks overtook the airwaves.

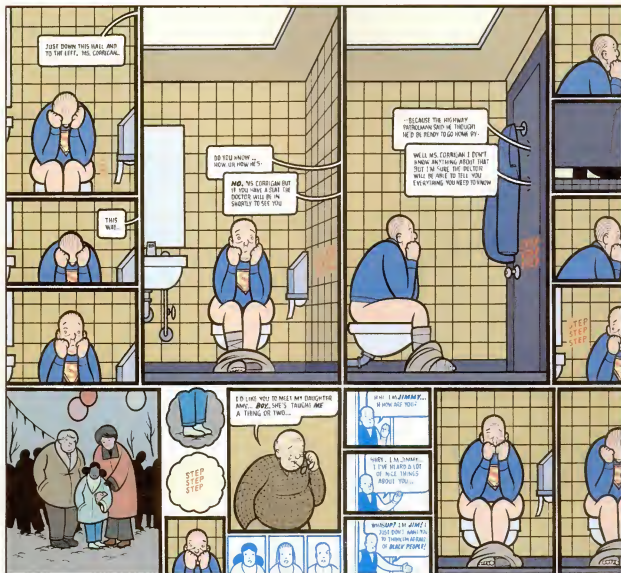


Now that David Lynch has fallen off the radar, who can we count on to creep us out? Well, amidst the profiles and essays in **Apocalypse Culture II** (Feral House Press), Crispin Hellion Glover proves he can still wantonly curdle notions of middlebrow good taste while spinning an indictment of Steven Spielberg that borders on conspiracy theory. ("Is it possible that the Columbine shootings would have

not occurred if Steven Spielberg had never wafted his putrid stench upon our culture, a culture he helped homogenize and propagandize?") And Glover's just one of many pinheads in this 400-plus-page freak show, which also includes a neo-Nazi deconstruction of Don McLean's song "American Pie," scatologists' recipes for excrement, pedophiles who paint.... For those who wasted childhood trying to explain what made Brando, Morrison or the Fonz so damn cool, there's **Cool Rules: Anatomy Of An Attitude** (Foci), a brief cultural history that analyzes the roots of ironic detachment, tracing

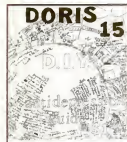
dude-ism back to Italian courtiers of the Renaissance and West African shaman as well as mapping out its modern progression in a flowchart.... *Sex And The City* fans itching for a new conquest can cuddle up with Candace Bushnell's new **4 Blondes** (Atlantic Monthly). Manhattanite 20-somethings may be disappointed that Bushnell drapes her Ricki Lake psychobabble and *Melrose Place* plotlines onto 30-something Hamptonites, but in between melting the plastic manners of the nouveau riche there's still plenty of horny dissatisfaction and deal-making blowjobs. Those writing for a younger (and occasionally more charming) take on the frazzling spirals of angst-ridden romantic misery can check out Lucinda Rosenfeld's *Random House* debut, **What She Saw In Roger Mancuso, Gunter Hopstock, Jason Barry Gold...** (this goes for another dozen names). Let's just say that the staggeringly long title isn't the only reason to wonder if Fiona Apple edited the ingénue romp.





Chris Ware is the most formally daring cartoonist around right now, an incredible designer whose ultra-smooth, old-fashioned style puts a poker face on his stories' brain-twisting experiments and vicious emotional punch.

Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid On Earth (Pantheon, excerpted on the left) is his magnum opus, a 380-page story he's been serializing for the last seven years in *Acme Novelty Library* and his weekly comic strip. On the surface, it's pretty straightforward—a lonely middle-aged man's visit with the father he never knew becomes the background for four generations of the family's misery—but the story is just the springboard for a tour de force of visual invention and Ware's acerbic meditations on history.



The 15th issue of the zine **Doris** (\$1.50 from Cindy, P.O. Box 1734, Asheville, NC 28802) is an all-comics "anti-depression guide": an extended stick-figure rant about how to break a blue mood that derails into a hilarious series of digressions about coffee freak-outs, getting free medical care and trying not to daydream about being a trained assassin.... Cartoonist/children's book illustrator Linda Medley's pet project, **Castle Waiting**, a gentle, wry fantasy on themes from folklore

and fairy stories, has been appearing irregularly for years. The first storyline has just been collected in *The Lucky Road* (Cartoon Books), and she's relaunched the series (now also published by Cartoon Books) with a charming story that brings together all the traditional tales she could find about bearded women, especially the legend of St. Wilgefortis.... Under the new creative team of writer Mark Millar and artist Frank Quitely (who drew last year's surprise hit *JLA: Earth 2*),



The Authority (Wildstorm) has become the most talked-about comic of the year—an ingeniously plotted, red-of-tooth-and-claw satire of both mainstream comics and geopolitics, full of very thinly veiled versions of familiar characters. At its best, it reads like a whistle-blower exposing the lies and propaganda of superhero culture.... **100**

Bullets (Vertigo) has a great high concept: A stranger reveals the identity of someone who's done something

terrible to you, and gives you an untraceable gun, 100 bullets and the promise of immunity—what do you do? Brian Azzarello and Eduardo Risso's crime comic has moved past its initial moral-dilemma vignettes and into a deeper, murkier, more engrossing narrative about the long-term consequences of violence and secrecy.



**DEUS EX** (Eidos Interactive) PC

Back before 1 GHz processors and 64 MB video cards, PC games had to rely on their design and storytelling skills to create memorable experiences. *Deus Ex* harks back to back to those days of yore, with an impressive marriage of first-person action and role-playing similar to its cousin, *System Shock 2*. As anti-terrorism agent J.C. Denton, you're the love child of the Bionic Man and *The Matrix's* Neo, tasked with unraveling a global conspiracy involving everyone from your United Nations bosses to the shadowy Illuminati. This requires infiltrating terrorist facilities, hacking computers, talking to crime lords, hanging out in Hong Kong nightclubs and generally blowing shit up. The dizzying array of weapons, gadgets, upgradeable skills and nanotech augmentations (i.e. high-tech superpowers) is as mouth-watering as the open-ended variety of approaches to the game's obstacles. Walk in the front door with a rocket launcher or sneak undetected through the ceiling vents—the choice is yours. *Deus Ex* isn't perfect, especially when it comes to the oddball enemy A.I., but its vivid near-future setting and kick-ass character building overshadow these flaws. >>>Steve Tilley

SPACE CHANNEL 5 (Sega) Dreamcast

Who'd have thought that interstellar invaders had soul? With a newfound knack for getting down, be-boppin' aliens are taking over the galaxy, one funky step at a time. But nobody wants to be forced to shake their moneymaker. Thankfully, when the so-called Morolians mess with Spaceport 9, roving reporter Ulala (pronounced ooh-la-la) jumps in to perform a safety dance. Jiggle by jiggle, Little Miss Orange Miniskirt has to mimic the monsters' moves to defeat the funky freaks and keep ratings high. Essentially, pop, techno and hip-hop converge in a retro-futuristic dancing game of Simon Says for the new millennium. From clothing styles to level and character design, *Space Channel 5* oozes ultra-cool style and attitude. A word of caution though: Overcoming those pimp-slapping multicolored munchkins, funky bosses and rival reporters demands the reflexes of a Shaolin monk. Still, the rear-ends justify the means. Ulala's the kind of rumpshaker that'd give Wreckx-N-Effect a coronary.

>>>Scott Steinberg

**DIABLO II** (Blizzard Entertainment) PC

The obsessive-compulsive ward at your local mental health facility is taking new patients. *Diablo II*, the follow-up to 1997's hack 'n' slash RPG lite, fulfills the requirements of a good sequel: bigger, better and more. God, er, Satan is in the details this time, with five radically different character classes, expanded skill sets, a richer storyline and enough hard-to-find magic items to keep questers up until the wee hours. But as you hunt down the horny old devil this time around, it's not all brimstone and roses. After three years in the

making, many fans are not going to be thrilled with *Diablo II's* retro-pixelicious 640 x 480 graphics, and online multiplayer via

Blizzard's overtaxed servers is only fun when it's not lagging like a one-legged granny. Still, the crack-cocaine addictiveness of the

legendary original is here, and it's just as hard to ignore. It's the computer game version of reality TV—something fun to do when your brain needs a break. >>>Steve Tilley

**SUPER MAGNETIC NEO** (Crave) Dreamcast

Pinki, the megalomaniacal toddler, is throwing a major tantrum. She and her gang of nasties have invaded Pao Pao Park and are infesting it with dangerous magnetic gizmos and evil metallic robots. But you don't have to take that crap from a two-year-old. As Neo, pajama-clad, magnetically brained robot extraordinaire, you must foil Pinki's plans using the positive/negative polarity of your head to repel enemies or to stick to trapeze-like chains to avoid obstacles and traps. *Super Magnetic Neo's* world/level structure is remarkably similar to the *Crash Bandicoot* series, right down to the obligatory "boss" levels, and game play is highly amusing once you get used to the controls, which are fairly difficult to master. Neo progresses rather quickly in difficulty—and out-and-out frustration factor—as well. Accuracy of movement using the DC joystick is hard enough at times, but when the game mandates "super speed boost" mode to jump wide crevasses, things get a little hairy. In fact, as you watch precious lives get gobbled up by the same pitfall time after time, the language in the room could get a little too colorful even for an evil, foul-tempered toddler like Pinki. >>>Aaron Clow



WHAT WAS THAT AGAIN?



CHRIS CHING

Few innovations of the Net are more useful than the humble FAQ file—the answer to “frequently asked questions” about just about anything. Invented in the early ‘80s, it’s usually credited to Eugene Miya, who regularly posted a set of common questions and answers to an ARPAnet mailing list on NASA and space. Now there are tens of thousands of FAQs on the Web, about every conceivable subject. The biggest FAQ clearinghouse is the **Internet FAQ Archives** (www.faqs.org/faqs), which currently houses more than 3,400 files from Usenet newsgroups, useful and otherwise. It doesn’t include some of the more esoteric groups, though—if you’ve got a query about the **alt.swedish.chef.bork.bork.bork** group, for instance (like the ever-popular “Whoot ees dees noosgroop fur?”), you’ll have to go to www.best.com/~tbrowne/chef-faq.html.

Besides, there are plenty of topics that don’t have their own Usenet groups, but still attract the same questions again and again. If you’ve ever wondered anything—anything at all—about Scrabble, the **Scrabble FAQ** (www.teleport.com/~stevend/scrabble/faqtext.html) has the answer. There’s a lot of room devoted to professionals’ squabbles over which dictionaries should be officially recognized, but the entertaining parts are the records of classic plays—the all-time highest-scoring first move, for instance, was Sam Kamimathi’s seven-letter grand slam, **BEZIQUE** (124 points), in a 1993 tournament.

An extensive FAQ about **Mentos**—yes, the candy—circulated for a few years, and has finally been permanently enshrined at www.mentosfaq.com. It’s got extensive descriptions of all 13 Mentos TV ads of the ‘90s, including several that never aired in North America, as well as explications of every Mentos flavor, package and piece of merchandise available in the world, and a comprehensive catalogue of Mentos appearances in mass media. As a bonus, there are three issues of the mercifully defunct “Mentos Journal.”

Some FAQs are put together by people who, perhaps, care a little too

deeply about their subjects. If, for instance, you saw the **X-Men** movie this summer and are curious to know more about the comic series it’s based on, you might want to look at the rec.arts.comics.marvel.xbooks FAQ (www.enteract.com/~katwe/faq/raemxFAQ/faq1.html), a remarkably long document that straddles the razor-sharp line between intentionally funny and unintentionally funny. It starts off fairly informatively, and drifts bit by bit into explanations so convoluted that the explainers don’t understand them. One long, tortured clarification ends “At this point, since we now have all of the possible references contradicting themselves, this neutral researcher says ‘to hell with it’ and closes the subject.”

There’s also a certain art to writing FAQs that answer questions one hopes wouldn’t be asked all that frequently, the classic example of which is Ben Parrish’s **Pong FAQ** (www.musenet.org/~fmzkz/wall/pong.faq)—2700 words on how to hit a little white ball with a little white paddle and, well, other things. And if you have burning questions about “plushies”—people who are sexually attracted to stuffed animals—they can almost certainly be answered by the FAQs at **FoxWolfie Galen’s Furry Plushie Page** (www.velocity.net/%7Egaleen). Yikes.

All of this, of course, leaves open the issue of what questions people are actually asking. **Ask Jeeves** has added a page, updated every 30 seconds, listing the most recent queries submitted through it (www.ask.com/docs/peek). Most are fairly predictable—requests for coconut macaroon recipes, female masturbation techniques, photos of Christian Bale—but there are some unnerving questions, like “Where can I find tips on make-up for trendy teens?” and “What are the medicinal uses of lettuce?” It’s hard to know where to go from there, except to a page that can answer any question you have: **The Public 8 Ball** (8ball.federated.com) isn’t just a Magic 8 Ball simulator, it purports to be a genuine Magic 8 Ball with a live video camera focused on it, and a device that will turn it over when you ask your question. God bless technology.

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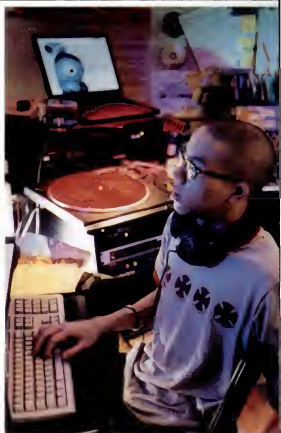


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CJ NEW MUSIC
ISSUE 86 OCTOBER 2000

18 The members of Washington, DC, approach scientist **MONSIEUR** learn that their class of horses represents, from their wish to start and spread a Doberman to a just at the point. The Earth itself can explain them for the products they'll witness in a Vancouver recording their new record. Interview (TV), which involves **Shelley**. "I had a waitress 300 years in the 'reals' missed all that," so there reason the thought was going to be taken by a woman with one eye. "I've been waiting out for people with my genetic." (See On the Web p. 22)

[illegible]

18 **WDA SURFS** The "heating effect," featuring "Therapeutic," was already on sale in Europe when Eli Lilly started the Stateline release. Lilly execs were concerned that there wasn't a single on the shelves after efforts that could have up to the 40 population of '96's largest "Tropicana." After some legal wrangling, Nash Surf managed to release the record in America via their own label, "M-Dee." There's no one to be at cross-purposes with "sage" sophisticated Matthew

18 **Brimingham, Alabama** natives Allison and Catherine Pease dedicated much of their early years to ballet. But after extensive singing and dance-company trials, the willowy siblings decided to hone in their talent sloppers for a pair of acoustic guitars. "People just started asking us to play," Allison explains. "After a while, we started getting [for people like Eminem's Harris, David Wilcox and Sister Hazel] *THE PRINCEDS*—sell-titled 550. Epic debut features the quartet's pop tune 'The Way.'"

20 "I've had a good deal to say in my time, but," says **FRANK ADAMS** of the Jacksonville, North Carolina, North Coast, "You'd have thought getting [Adams] down there and a critical moment. My introduction to the outside world, music and through people. And, 'Hey, everybody thought Adams back to his job in Mississippi, to show what he learned from all those periods of music—really, how to combine the song parts of a song with the descriptive sections of country. Learn more about his travels: www.106.106.com." (See feature p. 28.)

21 **ANNOYING JIMMY** "WORLD aren't just paragoners of gangster-symptom rock. They're self-loathing too. It's a service to doctors who'd been telling us out of our minds that, 'They're just ingesting Scleritis (big Alton Richardson, which features 'I Say To You Now'—there's a chance it was their never-released songs they put out) with blood through.' Specialized Jim Adams explains, 'No, no, no. I mean, come on. We were in high school. I guess it was okay for what we were doing then, but it's not how we want to present us. We, 'Why, critics out my band.' (Adams' [See Review p. 49])

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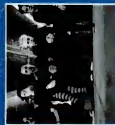
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JOHN WESLEY HARRING



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British singer/songwriter **JOHN WESLEY HARDING** has already released a slew of solo albums on various labels, kicked off the live releases it featured on *Night*. On his eighth full-length, the *Confessions of Sir Alec* (Warner Bros.) he has teamed up with **"Rock & Piss of Work"**—the folk-pop singer content doing it all on his own. "If I was a band, I'd have broken up years ago," the folk-pop singer explains, "but as a solo performer, it's very possible to be successful by playing the music you want if you have a supportive audience." (See Review p. 48.)

VIBROLASH singer Phil Nissel and lead guitarist James Mazzen met on the New York session-player circuit. "I was doing my own thing for a long time," says Nissel, "but James was the missing piece to the puzzle." Before long, the dynamic rock quartet was born. Mazzen explains the band's name: "We've got guitars, keyboards and lots of layering—it's tortured but still raw. That's the 'Vibro.' The 'Ash' part is the sum of all the elements—the music, the live show, the personalities. The name just fits our music." **"Touch And Go"** is their V2, about 15 minutes of their V2, about 15 tracks.

"Two brothers, Benji and Joel, at 21, are the eldest members of the punk-pop quintet GOOD CHARLOTTE, which sprung from a Maryland suburb near Washington, D.C. about two weeks after Benji started playing guitar. "I knew three chords: D, G and A," he recalls. Four years later, the boys are still singing about high school angst, but have hit the "burbs behind to open hours for the likes of *Teen*, *102.7*, *Rock*, *Radio* and *U2*. "The *Little Things*" is the first single off their self-titled *Good* about

"Having fun is still the main philosophy behind GLUECIEER, even though it's being a full-time job now," the Norwegian quint's guitarist Captain Poon told *Rolling Stone* magazine recently. "And I think we're getting closer to our goals." As their new *Scandinoven rock explosion*, one of the band's goals is to use tracks like "I Got A War" from their new *Teardrop* (Sub Pop) to revive the dirty, classic rock aesthetic. According to Poon, it shouldn't take long. "I think Gluecifer is way too good. And we're going to blow the scene in the underground."

On the Jacksonville, Florida quartet CO.D.'s sophomore album, *13 Ways To Bleed On Stage* (Flip-Geffen), the band's added another guitarist to give frontman Scotter Ward a bit more freedom. "With a guitar arsenal," Ward explains, "I wasn't as personal with the crowd as I wanted to be. I wanted more energy and intimacy." And Ward can easily explain the kind of energy the band displays: "We're heavy. We rock. We put our emotions on the line." Check the first single, "Just Got Me Back," for a

Like the ever-energetic Beck, Mexico's Titán prefers to avoid the trappings of calculated and any rock, opting instead to give rock a playful fling on the nose with retro-funk beats and kooky lyrics samples. "We don't think that rock needs to be so serious," says keyboardist Emilio Arecedo. As for the process that produced Elevator (tongue-in-cheek)—which includes "Cancún"—basest Jay of de Cuern says, "We work spontaneously—the music tells us what to do. The music comes out by itself." (See Quick Facts, p. 13.)

Rupert Parks, a.k.a. PHOTEN, released his first full-length in 1997, and since then he's been known for serving up intricate, danceable beat slices. "I like to dissect rhythms. Anyone who can't hear emotion in a drum beat suffers from a lack of understanding of what's going on in dance music and they need to hear more," he asserts. "*Last Blue Heaven*" comes from his latest, *Solars* (Jollywork).

The title for GRANDMOTHER's most recent record, *The Spoken Word* (V2) came to Herman Jaxon Lytle "while I was wandering through mountains of cast-off computer components in thrift stores," he says. The album, which includes hipster indictment "The Crystal Lake," may be inspired by America's geography of outmoded technology. But there's nothing as straightforward as even very computer-oriented—such as Grandmother's sound, a vaguely psychedelic, soothingly eerie lake or good old-fashioned media rant.

Although the London-born **TEDDY THOMPSON** comes from well-respected musical stock (he's the son of Richard and Linda Thompson), his early musical endeavors weren't exactly groundbreaking. "We would do really bad cover tunes," the unsunguitarist admits, "whatever was on the charts." I have a hazy memory of doing a Guns N' Roses song. It was probably really awful." These days, he's given up the guitar for his own folk-influenced rock. His set-listed Virgin debut features the track "Make Us One," and several notable guest appearances, including his pops and Rufus

"What I like to do is transport the audience somewhere in time and space," says Japanese singer YUI OHKUBI. "I think that used to be the function of music, recollections or dreams, or myths about far away places." His focus on myths and legends has been updated, however, with the release of his new single, Orange Future (Farnet), which borrows the track "Paper Tigers," and features collaborations with Guided By Voices' Doug Meltzer. "Now we have cities instead," Onki says. "So I think what I'm concerned about is how to tell a story that's about the future. (p. 10)

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TITAN



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STORY AND PHOTOS: AIKO ISHIKAWA

Japan gave the world Akira Kurosawa, PlayStation and photo stickers; America returned the favor with Starbucks and Tower Records. Take Tokyo, for instance: With a megafanchise on every corner, it's just like any other Americanized major world city. Or is it?

A glance at the menu of any Tokyo McDonald's (green tea shakes and ginger-soy sauce burgers, anyone?) will remind you that you're not in Kansas anymore. Then check out the French fashion, the Latin clubs and the Belgian waffle stands. With all these cultural collisions, it might not be clear just where you've landed—because here in Japan's capital, cultural fusion is the norm.

The Tokyo music scene is no exception. Bossa nova musician Risa Ono, chanson-tinged pop singer Mondy Michiru, reggaeman Moomin' and rapper Zebra all sing in Japanese, but borrow their multi-culti contexts. While these artists remain local heroes, internationally known artists from Tokyo, like Kahimi Karie and Pizzicato Five, are ghettoized at home due to their frequent use of European languages. R&B and hip-hop of all kinds is huge; witness acts from all over the world and around the corner at **Shibuya Club Quattro** (32-13 Udagawa-cho, 03-3477-8750) and **Akasaka Blitz** (5-3-6 Akasaka, 03-3357-8080). Or check out the smoky **Club Quo** (2-5-2 Kitazawa, 03-3412-9979) and **Shinjuku Loft** (7-8-11 Nishi-Shinjuku, 03-3365-0698) where underground bands play rock, punk, ska and dub. At **Liquid Room** (1-20-1 Kabukicho, 03-3200-6831), local DJ Chari Chari plays his own beat-happy blend of Asian, Caribbean and African sounds.

According to Takeshi Miyachi, editorial director at Bounce magazine, published by Tower Records Japan, Tokyo's music fans have become "very flexible" in the last decade. "It's not weird at all now if someone listens to, say, some underground ska band and mainstream pop at the same time. I think it's because contemporary Japanese music itself has spun out of the fusion of imported sounds," he says.

The best way to find out what's in everyone's MD Walkman—that's right, Minidisc is a more common portable music format than CD or tape in Tokyo—is FM radio. There are no college or independent stations in

Japan because of radio regulations, which include an expensive air charge. But J-Wave (81.3) and Tokyo FM (80.0) play current local favorites, like Brazilian-influenced **Mondo Grosso**, the Japanese R&B prince **Ken Hirai** and pop group **The Brilliant Green**, as well as American and other international fare. If you miss English-speaking DJs, try Inter

FM (76.1). These stations also have weekly top sales countdowns, which, unlike America's Casey Kasem, include anything from rock and pop to merengue, rap, house, French chanson and reggae.

Tokyoites keep up with so many different kinds of music through the innovative CD rental system: At **Tsutaya** (various locations, 03-5424-1700), one of the biggest CD/video rental franchises, you can find more than 6,000 album titles in various genres from more than 20 countries. The regular rental charge per album per week is ¥300, which is less than three dollars.

For record shopping, many local DJs frequent the Shibuya district, where there are reliable vinyl stores like **Sisco** and **Manhattan Records**. Sisco (11-11 Udagawa-cho, 03-3462-0366) has a small but good selection of imported vinyl, from trance to classic dancehall. Manhattan Records divides its huge vinyl selection into three shops: Manhattan I (10-1 Kifune Bldg., Udagawa-cho, 03-3477-7166) offers hip-hop and R&B records; II (10-1 Park Bldg., Udagawa-cho, 03-3477-7737) holds house and techno; and III (10-2 Shin-Tokyo Bldg., Udagawa-cho, 03-5457-5677) offers soul and dance classics. Twenty minutes away by train is the cramped **Higline Records** (2-14-16 Kitazawa, 03-5432-7411), where you'll find virtually any Japanese indie release.

After a hard day of record shopping, head out to Shibuya or Roppongi for drinks and dancing. In Shibuya the finest local DJs spin electronica at clubs like **Cave** (34-6 Udagawa-cho, 03-3780-0715) and **Club Asia** (2-21-7 Dougenzaka, 03-3458-5963), and hip-hop at **Harlem** (2-4 Maruyama-cho, 03-3461-8806). The Roppongi area offers a wide variety of bars, including **Salsa Sudada** (7-13-8 Roppongi, 03-5474-8806), the loud Brazilian joint **Acazajé Tropicana** (1-1-1 Nishi-Azabu, 03-3479-4680) and the ever-chaotic American bar **Gas Panic** (3-10-5 Roppongi, 3402-7054). At any of these places you'll have no problem meeting open-



SHINJUKU STATION.

mindful, friendly people from all over the world, thanks to the international atmosphere of the area and the crowd that loves it. Just keep in mind, though, that all the trains and buses stop running around midnight.

Jeans and sneakers are allowed in most clubs and bars in Tokyo, as long as you don't look like a schlump. Still have nothing to wear? Head to the fashion-centric Shinjuku area and re-outfit yourself at stores like **Marui/OICITY** (3-30-16 Shinjuku, 03-3354-0101), **Studio Alta** (3-24-3 Shinjuku, 03-3350-5500) and **MyCity** (3-38-1 Shinjuku, 03-5269-1111). Bargain hunters can find similar fashion wares in Harajuku, where you can hit cheap boutiques along Takeshita Street and Meiji Avenue.

If Tokyo's cultural fusion crashes your mental hard drive, take a walk in the historical downtown Asakusa. Enjoy the traditional storefronts along the paths, where you'll find artisans making rice crackers and other Japanese treats, as well as handmade folk crafts. For an old-school chill-out session, visit **Sensoji** (2-3-1 Asakusa, 03-3842-0181), the oldest Buddhist temple in Tokyo.

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WEATHERING A TSUNAMI IN SHIBUYA.

JOURNEY

STORY: LORNE BEHRMAN
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It was the summer of '89, just after my bar mitzvah. I was a man. A blue-veined nine-to-five-er en route to earn an honest day's pay. Oh, and I was in love.

I punched the clock at the nearby Jewish day camp, Shalom Haverim. Tara worked at our neighbor/rival camp, East Valley. I met her the summer before, back when we were campers, but things were different now. I only had to look down at the "staff" scripted on my purple, standard-issue camp T-shirt to see that. Though she jilted me the previous year for an older guy, the puberty fairy had come in the nine months we were apart and I knew my stock had risen. I felt *Top Gun* virile.

This here iron horse is gonna take me to see my baby, I'd muse, seated comfortably in the back of the minivan on the way to camp. Pulling the red cassette with the winged cyber-insect on the cover from my camouflage backpack, I always sighed: Journey's *Greatest Hits!* The passion they packed into this tiny plastic slab! Every time "Any Way You Want It" kicked in, I imagined me in the video as Journey guitarist Neal Schon with Tara gawking in front of the tube at the awesome image. I was that mulleted Adonis in a ripped sleeveless T-shirt, magically pumping my fists while simultaneously playing my guitar.

I can't remember how this sick obsession began—to this day I blame my older sister for blasting *Raised On Radio* in her room—but I do remember when I first discovered that Journey was totally lame. High school. In junior high you could still get away with playing with Gobots. High school was a different animal; it would eat you alive if it sensed vulnerability or natveté. I knew it wouldn't be wise to have "Separate Ways" leaking out of my Walkman during study hall—so what once made me feel good started to make me feel bad. All addictions are that way. I soon cut loose all the visible giveaways of my Journey fixation, from my blow-dried puffy soccer-rocker hairdo to my vast acid wash collection. Instead, I began slowly paddling out to my very own island of coolness: punk rock.

With the fascist fury of a punk purist, I cleansed my record collection of all detractors to the spiky-haired regime. Journey and the *Footloose* soundtrack were the first to go. Soon after, in college, I became fascinated with authenticity issues—the streets were real, the suburbs weren't, and I knew I was on the white picket side of the fence. Still conflicted about how my past related to my present, and conflicted



"Touring the country with my punk band, I constantly feared that I would be found out. And slowly I was."

that it was 1997 and I was living in 1977, I found myself and my punk band touring the country. Though we played nightly to squatter-looking suburbanites like myself, I constantly feared that one day I would be found out. And slowly I was.

It wasn't a vicious tabloid outing, but a personal one. I was getting tired of searching for beauty in the grit of G.B.H. or the Exploded. I was in love again, and I wanted accessible, instant emotional euphoria. I began to miss Journey's polished longing. There's no secret subtext to "Don't Stop Believin'" or "Be Good To Yourself." As the glory of drugs and booze wore off, I longed for Journey's chicken-soup-for-the-soul lyrics.

We were on tour when I got the itch. I was in a used record store sifting through the "J" bin—the Jam, Jane's Addiction, the Jesus And Mary Chain...Journey. Face-to-face with the space-vermin cover, my palms began to sweat. The store was relatively empty and the clerk was poring over a tattered zine behind the register. I can't buy this, I thought, calling up the embarrassing visual of a Sid Vicious-looking dude, i.e. me, purchasing Journey's *Greatest Hits*. Hmm, I bet no one would notice if I...my inner dialogue trailed off as I surveyed the scene closely. Fuck it. I shoved the disc in my leather jacket and got hell out of there.

Frequent *CMJ* New Music Monthly contributor Lorne Behrman welcomed this assignment with "Open Arms."

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